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86 FEBRUARY

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WHITE DWARF

ISSUE 86 FEBRUARY 1987

Issue 86 of **White Dwarf** started during December when *Mike Brunton* sat down and decided what the magazine would include. With the assistance of *Marc Gascoigne*, the text was prepared for *Julie Weaving* and *Gail Morgan*. They entered it into the phototypsetting machines. The text was sent back to Mike and Marc for proofreading, so that (in theory) all the mistakes would be corrected. Hmmm. *Alan Merrett* came downstairs to ask how **Dwarf** was going.

While that was going on text lengths were calculated and the words were handed over to *Charlie Elliott*. He worked on the design of the pages - where the text and illustrations would fall.

John Blanche chose the artists for the various articles and to suit Charlie's designs. John also chose the cover picture: 'Trey of Swords' by *Rodney Matthews*.

Every once in a while *Bryan Ansell* (the boss) said 'Wouldn't it be a good idea if...' or 'I think so-and-so would be really good, you know...' We thought his ideas were quite good as well.

Ivor Chomacki spent a lot of time on the telephone selling the advertising space.

The commissioned artwork came back from *Martin McKenna, Euan Smith, Russ Nicholson, Brett Ewins* and *Aly Morrison*.

Copies of the piccies were made and given to Alan, along with Charlie's page designs, the corrected text and the hundred and one other bits needed to produce the magazine. Alan gave all the bits to *Mark Craven, Ian Varley, Ruth Jeffery, David Oliver, Joanne Podoski, Sue McLoughlin* and *Richard Wright*. They pasted-up the magazine. Mike came upstairs to ask how **Dwarf** was going.

At this stage sanity entered the proceedings, and WD was treated just like any other printing job: film-making, the mad rush to complete the last couple of pages, and then off to the printers.

All that work is publishing, and in WD's case it's done by *Games Workshop Limited*.

Finally, you got your copy.

Issue 87 of **White Dwarf** started when...

Mike Brunton

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OPEN BOX

THE PRICE OF FREEDOM
Roleplaying Game
West End Games - £16.95

Let's be quite clear about this. **The Price of Freedom** is a game of violent resistance to a Soviet occupation of North America. Nothing more, nothing less. I'll come back to this in a minute as the background is, after all, the game's entire justification.

As we've come to expect from West End, the presentation of *Price* is excellent. The box is full, a fact spoilt only by the largely superfluous counter storage tray in it - nick it for another game. The various components are professionally finished and pleasing to use. My only gripe is that an index would have been useful, rather than just a case list of the rules.

It's good to see that roleplaying - as opposed to number crunching - is emphasised from the start. During character generation players are encouraged to think of their new characters in terms of personality, relationships and motivations *before* allocating numbers. The end result is that you can end up with, say, an Irish-American ex-cop, whose main interests in life are keeping up to date with the alimony payments, guns (remembering the good old days on the force) and lots of drink (his real passion). The numbers and skills to fit such a character outline are easy to assign, but *secondary* to his overall personality. Likewise the GM is encouraged to think of NPCs in terms of their personalities and goals and not worry about the numbers until they are needed. All to the good, in my opinion.

The whole game system is competant, as again one would expect from Greg Costikyan and West End. Skills and combat are straightforward, and produce 'realistic' results. There is a welcome lack of clutter in the number of weapons presented - a pistol is a pistol is a pistol. Just add gory descriptions if you want to be Dirty Harry or Rambo... There's also a now obligatory Hero/Luck/Fate point fudging system to allow the player characters to pull off heroic stunts at the critical moment in the plot - one example is lifting a bus(!) off somebody.

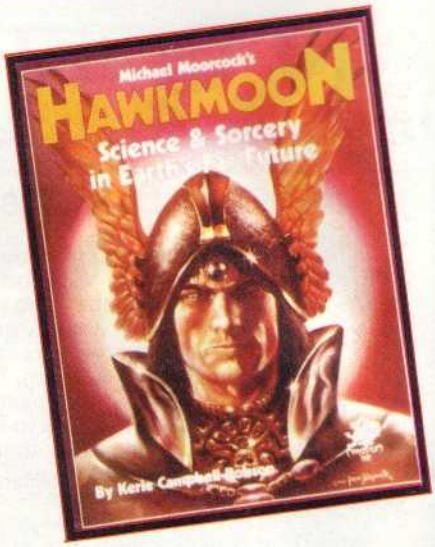
The referee's notes are some of the best to appear in any game, and explained in a clear and concise style. The advice on how to actually run adventures - long term NPC enemies, playing styles, atmosphere - is something that should be included in any roleplaying game. And again, roleplaying is emphasised; the 'feel' of what is going on in an adventure is more important than numbers. The bibliography is also quite extensive.

There's enough material in the game to provide a campaign background. The intoductory adventure is workmanlike, and gives most aspects of the game system an outing. I suspect that many experienced roleplayers will give it a miss, though. The other background and campaign material (as well as the bibliography) should give rise to plenty of ideas for further adventures. The GM's book also includes a set of short outlines for adventures - no game statistics, maps or any of the rest, just a situation and the personalities involved. Given the usual 'take it from here' approach of most games, these are more than welcome.

As a game, *Price* relies for its impact on the world it describes. *Price* presents a fantasy world where the Russians have 'Star Wars' and hold America to ransom. Within days Soviet troops land in the USA, and from then on things as presented go downhill rapidly. The threat from Soviet troops to 'your house, your car, your VCR... your family' (in that order) is emphasised even in 'A Note to Liberal Readers'. The whole presentation of the game is far from that of *Twilight 2000*, which presented a terrible world picture, but did so in a relatively neutral way. *Price* drops all pretence of being a neutral game system: 'Go out and kill them Commies!' is the message.

I have the feeling that *Price* is intended to be taken as a tongue-in-cheek game. At least, I hope it is...

Ashley Shepherd



HAWKMOON
Roleplaying Game
Chaosium £15.95

HIL SECTOR BLUES
Paranoia Adventure
West End £4.95

THE WATCHERS OF THE SACRED FLAME
Multi-system adventure
Integrated Games £8.95

Now you can join Dorian Hawkmoon, Count Brass, Oladahan, Yisselda and many other Michael Moorcock characters as they fight the Dark Empire. For the Hawkmoon game takes you into the lands of the Tragic Millenium where the armies of Granbretan are everywhere.

Hawkmoon uses the *Stormbringer* game system with the added bonus of new skills to allow player characters to build and repair technological devices. Magic is not available to player characters, although it is possessed by a few NPCs, but with the ability to create an acid or flame cannon who needs it? Players can decide to come from any racial background, even from Granbretan, in which case they have access to ornithopters, the strange flying machines employed by the Dark Empire. As in *Stormbringer*, characters start out reasonably experienced, allowing them to undertake all sorts of dangerous adventures in war-torn Europe.

Stormbringer players will find this game doubly interesting, as it allows characters to travel across the planes from the Young Kingdoms to Europe. As the same game system is used, players can be fitted into the new setting with great ease. Magic skills are, however, greatly reduced, as befits a world where Law is dominant and technolgy rules. *Hawkmoon* characters travelling into the Young Kingdoms face different problems, while their technology skills are not reduced, the whole basis of that technology often doesn't exist, so their skills become almost redundant. Trans-planar travel is a good feature of this game and one that captures the flavour of the Eternal Champion books very well.

Gamemasters familiar with the books will have no problem in elaborating on the background information provided to bring the game alive. Other GMs shoud read at least the first four Hawkmoon books before running this game. While background information is included in the game, a full feel for the setting can only be found in the books. One has to read the books to experience the strange brooding intensity of Londra and to fully appreciate just how strange a society it is.

Unfortunately, the adventures presented with the game do not do it justice, they lack the epic feel that exist in the books themselves, and are reminiscent of old style dungeon adventures - not the kind of thing that springs to mind when I think of Hawkmoon. No doubt Chaosium will produce far better adventures in the future to exploit the game's potential to the full.

Hawkmoon is a welcome addition to the Eternal Champion saga. There are a few problems with it, but fans of Michael Moorcock will be more than pleased to defend the Kamarg, or to battle in Londra to overthrow the Dark Empire for all time, or at least until other 'alternate realities' affect the outcome.

Peter Green

Alright, kids, we all know how absolutely brilliant that wacky game *Paranoia* is, and how truly wonderful its adventures are too. But for yours truly, and I suspect for one or two of you guys too, there's always been a sneaking suspicion that while the adventures are really great fun for the GM to read, they aren't quite so funny to play. All that sudden death and violent carnage sounds good on paper, but it does occasionally make for a very short game - and a disappointing one too if you've just spent a fiver on the adventure.

Well you need be disappointed no longer (as they say in all the best reviews), for West End have taken the extremely courageous step of producing a Paranoia Campaign Pack! Yep, players now get to survive longer than the first encounter - they get to earn unheard-of things like Experience Points and other arcane delights. Why? Because **HIL Sector Blues** is a set of rules and adventures to help you set up and run a long-lasting *Paranoia* campaign.

But is it any good, I hear you ask? Do me a favour, of course it's good! Written by Ken 'Completely Screwy' Rolston of *Orcbusters* fame, it comes as a chunky (and very reasonably priced) 64 page book, plus a wraparound cover that includes reference tables and the debut of the near-legendary *Cardboard Commies*™ cut-out figures. To go with these figures there is even a set of Miniatures Rules, so complicated they make *Warhammer* look like a text book on sub-atomic physics, and chock full of innovations such as using your entire house as a wargames table. If there is one word that describes these rules it is this one - SILLY.

The players obviously come into this somewhere; in fact, the rationale is that their good work in serving The Computer has earned them the opportunity to be transferred to an IntSec unit working out of HIL Sector. That's right, they get to join the Troopers! And in the Troopers there's none of this perpetual zapping of traitors and Commies - well, there is, but it's a lot subtler in the police service, with each player get sneakier and sneakier in their attempts to pin something on their (obviously) guilty comrades, hopefully in exchange for some promotion.

And just because the players are now in a vague position of power doesn't mean they're able to escape the attentions of loftier personages. Indeed, now the characters are often under the direct scrutiny of Ultra-Violets - a terrifying ordeal in itself! Still, it all adds up to a lot of crazy fun, helped along by three quite superb adventures (including one featuring a certain Ram-B-EAU, who I know we have not heard the last of). Add to these the very extensive notes on adventure design and running, the miniatures rules and all the rest, and you've got a package that will provide you and your players with a lot of entertainment - over and over again! *(Was that better, boss? No Marc, it wasn't. Keep taking those sincerity exercises - Ed.)*

Marc Gascoigne

This is the third set in the 'Complete Dungeon Master' series, which has been appearing at some intervals over the last two or so years, starting with *The Halls of the Dwarven Kings* and continuing with *The Lost Shrine of Kasar-Khan*. Much of the setting derives from the excellent campaign background in *Tortured Souls!*. Basic stats are provided that allow the adventure to be played with *AD&D* or *RuneQuest* rules.

With **The Watchers of the Sacred Flame**, the opening part of a 'heroic quest' style of interlinking scenarios takes place; although the events in the previous two sets are part of the same camapign, it is only now that players will see some long-term, goal to pursue. This is, as might be guessed, to do with a powerful artefact - a plot device common to the series. However, this is more than just a carrot in front of the players, it is actually the most important aspect of a detailed and imaginative background. The players not only have a limited idea of what it is they are chasing, they have scant idea of where it is, what relevance it has and who else might be interested in it! As an heroic quest, it is brought down to the level of a spy thriller, where you can't quite grasp the whole plot until the final page.

This works well, but I regret one thing. As a gamesmaster, I find it a pity that all the careful background and history is going to remain hidden from the players, while they chase around after the artefact and the bad guys. So much of the subtlety of this adventure is lost in play. I wonder if the players are to 'Understand It All' come the end of the Complete Dungeon Master series...

In the box, you get an impressive package with which to run the scenario. The adventure itself is detailed in a 32 page booklet; there is an NPC booklet; another showing some of the key scenes; you get more of the Endless Plans range of 25mm scale floor plans with which to show the layout of the settings; and a GM's screen with summaries of most of what you need to know. You also get a profusion of player handouts, which contain the only out-and-out failure of *Watchers*. There are two maps, and players are meant to guess how they work together to guide them from a little bit of information on another handout and some logic. I haven't seen this work yet. In fact, players are going to be mislead by these maps, which assume great importance simply because they are so obviously part of the adventure. Don't rely on these maps - be ready to help the party back on the right path.

The plans are attractive, and all but one is perfectly clear when compared to the descriptions on the screen (the castle layout isn't always easy to follow). The 'players' views' might seem a little superfluous, but I ended up using them quite a lot.

The adventure has a lot going for it. There are many excellent encounters, both passive and deadly. The gypsy encounter is great fun, run it for all it is worth. Some people might find the encounters a little cramped - this is due to the nature of floor plans, of course (at the scale, a decent size area is too big for the box), but it helps keeps things manageable, and the Endless Plans are as good for scene-setting as anything else.

Paul Cockburn

DA1 - ADVENTURES IN BLACKMOOR

D&D Adventure
TSR £5.95

Once upon a time, when D&D was very, very young, there was Gary Gygax, and there was also Dave Arneson. Gary Gygax ran a campaign called Greyhawk, and Dave Arneson ran a campaign called Blackmoor. Both gave their names to supplements for the original D&D, which was superceded by the first Basic rules in 1977. Eventually TSR published *The World of Greyhawk*, based on Gygax's original campaign. Dave Arneson, meanwhile, faded from the picture for one reason and another, but now he's back, and **DA1 Adventures in Blackmoor** uses his original campaign setting, updated for the *D&D Expert Rules*.

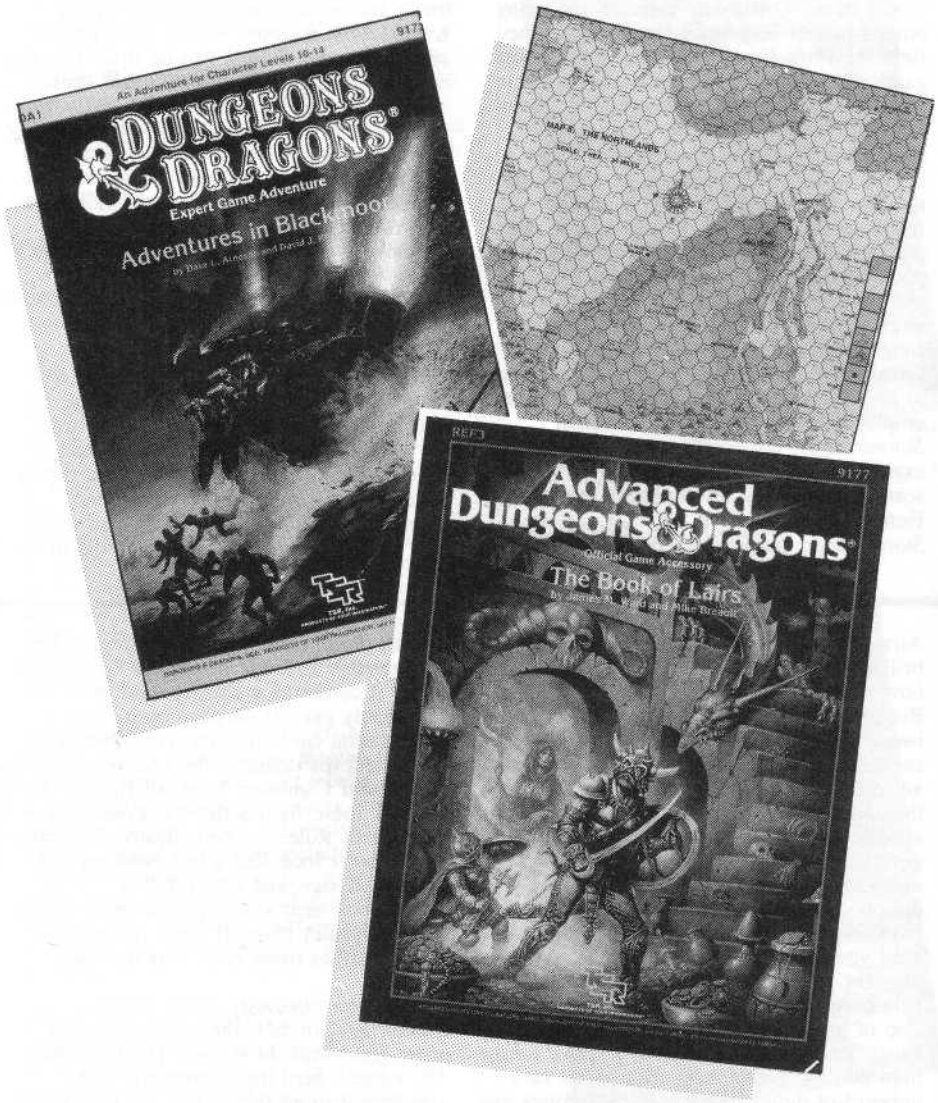
DA1 is an adventure for 10th-14th level characters, and consists of a 64-page booklet and an A2 colour map inside a wraparound card cover. Seven pages of GM's background give the history of the area in which the adventure is set, and another three pages deal with introducing the adventurers to the world of Blackmoor.

The whole adventure is a device to get the PCs into the world of Blackmoor from wherever they happen to be at the time; the action takes place in three versions of the same inn, which cuts down on the map requirement but can lead to a static feel in play. The introduction links this to *X1 Isle of Dread*, but there is no reason why the device can't be used in any game world. The inn itself is deserted, run-down, and a zoo-dungeon. A disappointing start, reminding us of Blackmoor's origins. There are, however, some intriguing clues, leading on to the next part of the adventure. As the inn shifts between dimensions, certain things change, and the second part of the adventure concerns itself with these changes. In the final part of the adventure, there is another dimension shift, things change once more, and we're in another old-fashioned zoo-dungeon. Once this is dealt with, the players will probably be thinking 'Right, we've sorted that out, and we've got into Blackmoor - what now?', and the answer, I'm afraid, is that you'll have to wait for *DA2*.

The final 20 or so pages are given over to a description of the world of Blackmoor, with no less than 38 prominent NPCs covered in detail. While this section is packed with interesting information, it falls between two stools; it isn't really part of the adventure at hand, and there isn't enough of it to make a campaign sourcepack upon which the GM can base further adventures in Blackmoor.

All in all, *DA1* is an adventure which never seems to get going; it only has one idea - albeit a fairly strong one - and the PCs never get to explore the world of Blackmoor, despite the colour map which comes as part of the package. Old hands who remember the TSR and Judges' Guild products of the late '70s will get a certain feeling of nostalgia from *DA1*, and despite the fact that zoo-dungeons are out of fashion these days, this one is well written and set out, with a reasonable plot, and should provide an interesting and enjoyable session's play - which is probably more important than current trends in adventure design. However, Peter Green's criticisms of *GDQ1-7* (WD85) apply with equal force here. It makes a reasonably good introduction to Blackmoor, but a lot will rest on *DA2* and the rest of the series; as a campaign starter *DA1* has a lot going for it, but it will stand or fall on what comes next.

Graeme Davis



REF3 - THE BOOK OF LAIRS

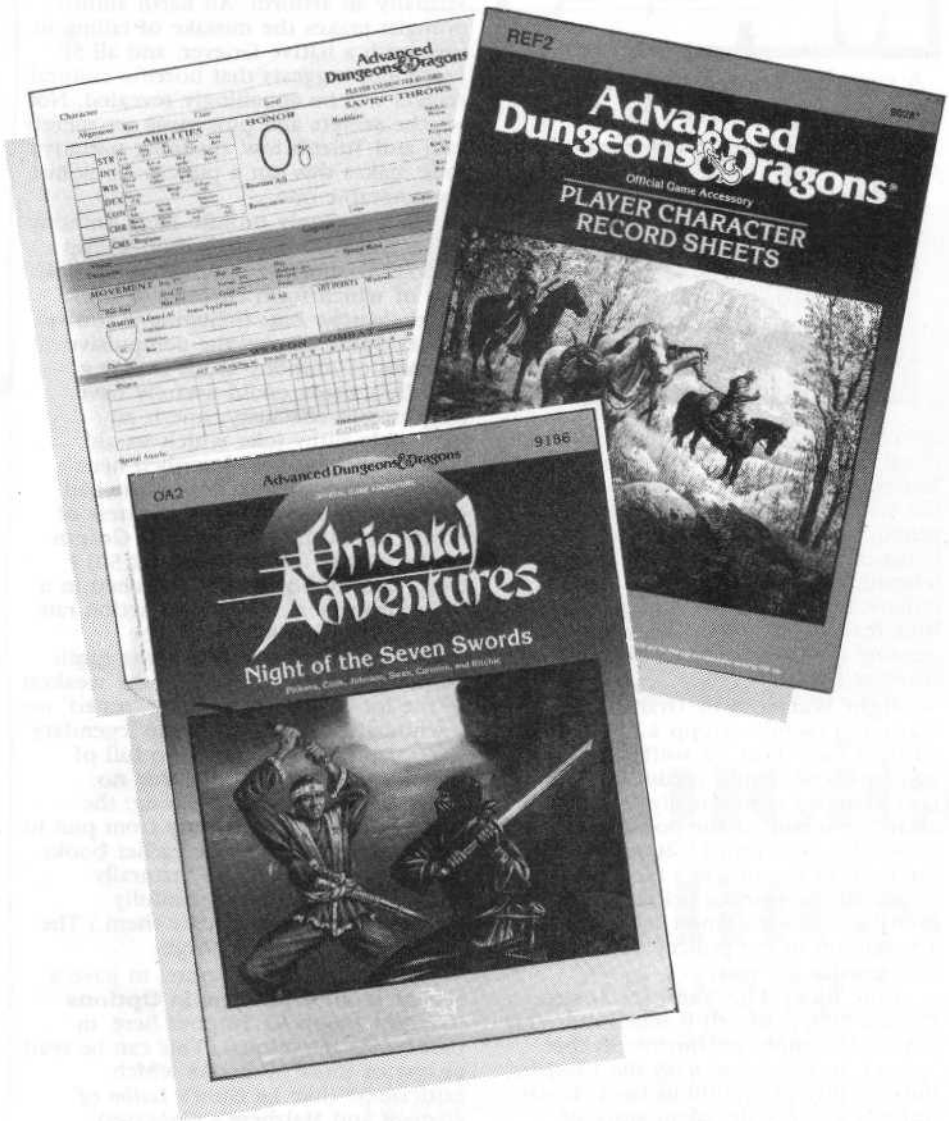
AD&D GM's Aid
TSR £6.95

REF3 is a 96-page booklet, containing potted details of the lairs of no less than 61 groups of monsters, drawn from all three AD&D monster books (and one from *Oriental Adventures*). Each can be used on its own as a short adventure, or can be dropped into a campaign as the GM wishes. The first thing I noticed is that there are only six maps in the whole thing, and most of the encounters need a certain amount of preparation on the part of the GM. The brief encounters (if I can use that term here) range from the fairly straightforward (one bear) to the positively frightening (876 Undead) and at the start of each is basic information on type of terrain, total party levels and experience points, plus a few lines of rumours designed to bring the location to Our Heroes' notice. As well as monster lairs, there are a few interesting NPC hideouts, but most suffer from the lack of a map.

Not everybody's cup of tea, but a very useful source of ideas and material for any AD&D GM, either to develop as full-blown adventures, or to fill in the gaps in a campaign, or for those dreadful Oh-God-I've-forgotten-the-module moments.

The bulk of the encounters are intended for 3rd-7th level parties, but some are for any level and a few go up to 12th, so everyone should be able to find something useful. I was reminded of the old Judges' Guild *Book of Treasure Maps* products, and certainly in terms of the number of adventures here, *REF3* is excellent value for money. Its only drawback is that, inevitably, there is a lot of work left for the GM to do, but it provides a great number of ideas which can be developed fairly easily.

One nice thing is that you can develop the encounters to suit your style of play - if you want hack-and-slay, you can have it, and if you want thought and roleplaying, you can



write that in as well. I'm still not sure about encounters which provide the party with 876 Undead, 130 Brigands, 80 Goblins and Orcs, 120 Kobolds, 251 Hobgoblins, 130 Lizard Men, 192 Bucaneers, 249 Sahuagin and the like - these give me the impression that someone has been rolling *No. Appearing* dice in the monster books rather than planning the encounters out - but even if you only use half the encounters in *REF3*, you'll get a fair run for your money.

Graeme Davis

OA2 - NIGHT OF THE SEVEN SWORDS

AD&D Oriental Adventures
TSR £5.50

OA2 is the second adventure for *Oriental Adventures*, and consists of a 48-page booklet inside a 3-part wraparound cover. The inside of the cover contains the plans of Ito-Jo, a castle, in the exploded-view *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide* style, plus more conventional groundplans of the dungeon beneath Ito-Jo and of an inn which features later on. When the cover is stood up as a DM's screen, the rather nice full-colour map of Maeshi Province is on the players' side. A poster-size province map, as in *OA1*, would have been nice, but is no great loss.

The booklet starts with a 3-page background section, detailing the geography and history of Maeshi province, and a page and a half of DM's information and notes on setting the adventure up. There is a lot to take in here, and the DM would be well advised to prepare thoroughly.

The adventure itself concerns the rivalry between two clans, a cursed, haunted castle and a box of relics, and the plot is interesting and believable. At first glance, though, the main part of the adventure looks disappointingly like a standard dungeon bash. There is an interesting encounter along the way, in which the party is required to be suitably honourable, but after that it's just a haunted castle. Mind you, it's a very *good* haunted castle, and even those who don't normally enjoy dungeon bashes will probably find it interesting and enjoyable. There are some interestingly Oriental bits and pieces which maintain the atmosphere nicely, and although some of the encounters are a little frightening for the suggested party strength of 6-8 4th-6th levels, a reasonable number of spellcasters should be able to cope. Certainly this is no adventure for an all-fighter party. Oh, yes - and there's a new *OA* monster that will be strangely familiar to non-OA AD&D players.

Having attained their objective in the castle, Our Heroes have various encounters on the return journey and make a delivery, avoiding the various machinations of their lord's rival. The two main settings, of a castle and an inn, make useful stock locations for *OA*, and the adventure itself is an interesting and well-balanced mixture of role-playing and fighting.

One drawback, to my mind, is that *OA2* is set in a different province from *OA1*, and it assumes that the PCs are in service with a certain Daimyo, but DMs who want to link the two in a campaign should be able to tweak the setting and the history with a little work. Overall, it's a nice adventure, with the Oriental Adventures rules used to good effect and the Oriental flavour maintained throughout. *Bushido* referees might also find it interesting, provided that they are prepared to do a bit of conversion work.

Graeme Davis

REF2 - ADVANCED D&D PLAYER CHARACTER RECORD SHEETS

AD&D Accessory
TSR £4.50

Hmmm - what do you say about a booklet of character sheets? Well, it's got a very nice cover, for one thing. Inside are 16 character sheets, with spaces for recording everything you could ever want to record for an AD&D character. There's even a space for Honour, if you happen to be playing *Oriental Adventures*. There are check-off boxes for supplies and ammunition, and room for brief details of the character's family and followers. I'm not sure whether there is enough space for things like magic items and weapons, but apart from that everything you'd expect is there.

In addition to the character sheets, there are 16 pages of a Spell Planner: 5 sheets of MU spells, 4 with Cleric spells on one side and Illusionist spells on the other, 4 with Druid spells on one side and *OA* Shukenja spells on the other, and 3 with *OA* Wu Jen spells on both sides. These consist of lists of every spell available to the character class in question. Each spell has three little check-boxes to cross them off as you select or use them, and lots of little symbols giving potted information on each spell. There is a key for these symbols inside the back cover, but learning how to use them looks like it could be hard work. A nice idea, though.

Well, not a lot else I can say, really - this product will sell well among AD&D players who like using Official™ character sheets, and not so well among those who don't. 16 character sheets isn't a lot for your money, especially when the meanies put a brown tone on which means that some bits come out black when you photocopy them.

Graeme Davis

CRITICAL MASS

A regular book review column, written by Dave Langford

DEMAND THE IMPOSSIBLE

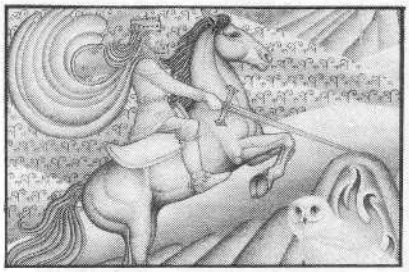
I pinched the title (above) from a book (below). This month's heap is indeed impossibly demanding, partly thanks to middle volumes of fantasy trilogies of which I've forgotten Volume 1, partly through Unwin's habit of misdirecting books to Nottingham until about six months' output is forwarded here at a stroke, and partly because nobody should have to cope with *two* Piers Anthony outbreaks in a single column.

Guy Gavriel Kay's **The Wandering Fire** (Unwin 298pp £10.95) continues the stylish and upmarket 'Fionavar Tapestry', an ambitious fantasy sequence in post-Tolkien vein. Kay's basic stage-setting is pure Tolkien — fair land, Black Lord, everyone approaching the final test. He adds dollops of passionate emotion, a tortuous tangle of human relationships, and mythic chunks from all over the shop. And the writing's good enough to make it all work... nearly. (There are minor glitches in naming: Kay may insist 'Aileron' is a High King, but I know he's just an aeroplane's wing-flap.)

The *Golden Bough*-ish themes of sacrifice and redemption are very effective, and when a sympathetic chap dies to end the arch-fiend's Fimbulwinter. I was less keen on the dreadfully familiar Wild Hunt stuff (though pleased to see the traditional warnings about 'old, wild magic' actually followed through — the cavalry comes over the hill to save the battle, and starts killing *everybody*.) The final quibble is really a question of taste. Mythic archetypes are fair game, and much fantasy concerns itself with echoing or retelling legends: all tales are the same Tale, said Tolkien, but was careful to invent his own mythos clear back to the Beginning. What Kay has done is to swipe characters from the finest legend of all, a Tale which is not his, and throw them into the already too-huge cast with promises of heavy Eternal Triangulation next book. I'd admire 'The Fionavar Tapestry' more if it weren't rapidly turning into... wait for it... *Le Morte D'Arthur Part II*. Can the author possibly bring this off? Hmm.

Judity Tarr's **The Golden Horn** (Bantam 272pp £9.95) is simple stuff without the big doomy effects: no delving into the greasy mythological stockpot, just a tight focus of thirteen-century erudition. Half-elven erstwhile monk Alf potters through the Fourth Crusade siege of Constantinople, makes friends, finds blameless heterosexual love despite riskier hints last volume, loses (nearly) all in the sacking of Byzantium, sets his face towards Rome and Book Three... This is more immediately successful than Kay's book because it takes fewer risks: an elegent Georgette Heyer romance moved back in time. In the long term? I can't remember anything of Tarr's volume 1, while still retaining vivid images from Kay's.

Huysman's Pets (Gollancz 247pp £9.95) shows Kate Wilhelm in almost light-hearted mood... one of those discreet contemporary thrillers which seem embarrassed by even a down-played SF content. A web of non-



coincidence ensnares some highly likeable characters, in particular the 'experimental animal' kids produced by the wicked tamperings of deceased geneticist Huysman. The forces of injustice are defeated by ham acting, telepathy, computer hacking and forged dollars, all very quickly and quietly. Nice reading, but more suspense and genuine nastiness would have made a stronger book.

Night Warriors by Graham Masterton (Sphere 410pp £2.95) is nasty all right, but short on stuff like suspense, coherence, credibility. 'The jaws clamped convulsively tight and bit away the whole of the policeman's upper lips and nostril.' 'Its claws caught the flesh of the officer's face, and ripped off everything below his eyeballs.' Thus the finest highlights (it's a tough job in the police). I shouldn't bother with the rest.

Anne Rice's **The Vampire Lestat** (Futura 599pp £3.50) is much more my cup of tea: there are horrors in this 'sequel' to *Interview with the Vampire*, but not silly or gratuitous ones. Lestat unfolds a lushly decadent story of learning to be undead amid the excesses of France before the Revolution. Rice's glowing vampires have the authentic combination of lethality and sexiness so essential to the myth (which in the films tended to get swamped by blood). She's also audacious enough to propound an acceptable 'origin story' for vampirism, and to move from dark old Egyptian mysteries to the extremes of twentieth-century Dionysian ecstasy as Lestat gives his first live rock performance. Nice one.

More 'classical' fantasy comes from Barbara Hambly in **The Ladies of Mandrigyn** (Unicorn 311pp £2.95), who is no great writer but excels at freshening what writers' workshops call 'traditional narrative elements' and some of us might term clichés. Here's an Evil Sorcerer who isn't actually that good at sorcery, a Brutal mercenary whose hobbies include philosophy and gardening, a Conquered Country which is not being laid waste but administered as occupied territory, a Female Resistance which doesn't mess around with Lysistrata tactics but demands combat training... Add unpleasant magical gimmicks and well-drawn characters, and the result is a ripping fantasy yarn.

Over in the science-fantasy corner, Jane Yolen's **Cards of Grief** (Orbit 193pp £2.50) offers understated semi-tragedy on a world where grieving is virtually an artform. An Earth anthropologist makes the mistake of falling in love with a native Griever, and all SF precedent suggests that horrific cultural secrets will be appallingly revealed. Not so: the secrets and plot turns are merely sad, and Yolen's low, moaning narrative tone makes this not a punchy book but a memorable one.

The amazingly prolific Piers Anthony offers **Anthonology** (Grafton 432pp £2.95): 21 short SF and fantasy stories, two of which form chapters in his novel *Prostho Plus* (irritating if you've got it). Some display the compulsive daftness of Anthony at his best (e.g. 'Hurdle'); many could usefully have remained in obscurity; one is an incredibly filthy joke which would shock your editor if described here. Acerbic introductions bewail the bad taste of editors and the obtuseness of critics. From the afterword of **Golem in the Gears** (Orbit 326pp £2.50) I learn that Anthony's just switched to a word processor... if his production rate rises further, the books will be appearing weekly. *Golem* is the ninth 'Xanth' fantasy and possibly the weakest of the lot (the series is being 'rested' for a while after this). Like some legendary D&D campaigns, Xanth is so full of whimsy and casual magic that no situation can threaten for long; the storyline lurches drunkenly from pun to banal pun. (Compare the earlier books, where puns cropped up 'naturally' without the plot being painfully wrenched to accommodate them.) The US readership loves it. Argh.

Robert Sheckley appears to have a similar plotline problem in **Options** (Grafton 156pp £2.50), but here, in theory, it's intentional. This can be read as one of those SF books which criticize SF (like Le Guin's *Lathe of Heaven* and Malzberg's *Galaxies*). Sheckley's hero is marooned without a spare part for his space drive, and despite writing himself into the book as the Man of a Thousand Disguises, the author is 'unable' to construct a credible plot device to save the situation. Lots of fun but, for obvious reasons, not much plot.

Also to hand: **Sandwriter** by Monica Hughes (Magnet 159pp £1.75), a very ideologically sound little fantasy fable of desert ecology and exploitation, sort of *Dune* in miniature for younger readers; Fritz Leiber's **Swords and Ice Magic** (Grafton £2.50), last and darkest of the fizzy Fafhrd/Mouser fantasy series; and our title book **Demand the Impossible** by Tom Moylan (Methuen University Paper-backs 242pp £7.95), subtitled 'Science fiction and the utopian imagination'. For completist SF academics, it's a some-what austere examination of four novels: Russ's *The Female Man*, Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* and Delany's *Triton*. For *Dwarf* readers heavily into such role-playing games as Marxist Analysis and the very popular Post-Structuralism (a recent supplement to *Paranoia*), it's a riot of heteroclitic theoretical mastery and prefigurative political understanding (or so says the back cover). Who could ask for more?

CURSE OF THE BONE

by Marcus L. Rowland

A modern Call of Cthulhu adventure for 2-5 investigators, set in London.

Players' Information

The investigator with the highest Occult knowledge is contacted by Doctor Erica Fowler, an acquaintance who knows of his (or her) interests. Doctor Fowler is a psychologist at the local hospital in Alberton, one of London's outer suburbs, and has recently come across a curious case which seems to need expert knowledge. One of her patients believes that he has been cursed, and is dying of (apparently) psychosomatic injuries. While Dr. Fowler doesn't believe in the occult, she would appreciate any help which might convince her patient that he isn't under magical attack.

Keeper's Information — Summary of Situation

The patient is Kerim Fomutesca, an African medical student studying at the hospital. Fomutesca has inadvertently come into contact with the activities of Eric Green, a cultist, murderer and cannibal who is the human leader of a small tribe of ghouls.

In 1964, Green (an RAF Flight-Sergeant) was the co-pilot of a transport aircraft which crashed in the mountains of Papua, New Guinea. He was the only survivor, but his left leg was broken and he couldn't escape from the wreck. In desperation, he began to eat the bodies of his dead comrades. Soon afterwards a cannibal tribe stumbled across the wreck; by this time Green was insane, and they interpreted his delirium as divine inspiration. They took him back to their village, set his leg, and began to initiate him into their cult of chthonian worship. He was an eager student, and soon learnt their language and several spells, while intensifying his appetite for human flesh.

Eventually, search aircraft found the wreck, and the local Shaman ordered Green to return to civilisation. He was committed to the chthonians, and might be a useful tool in England.

Illustrations by Martin McKenna

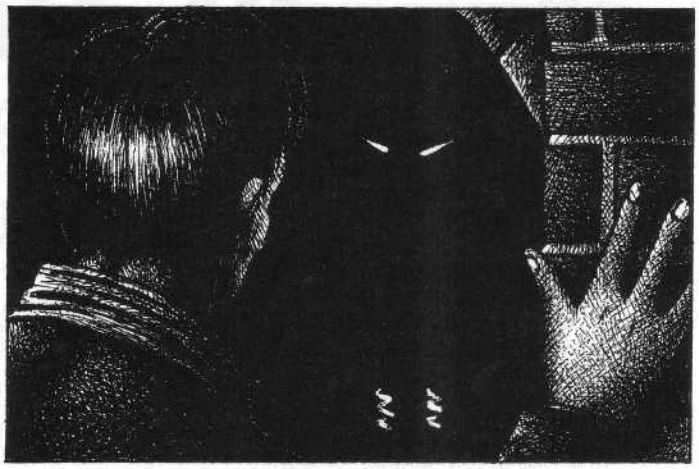
Green told his rescuers that he had spent a short time with a native tribe, without admitting his cannibalism or cult activities, and returned to England. He spent several months in hospital, while his leg was reset and he slowly recovered from various tropical infections. His injuries left him with a permanent limp, so he retired from the RAF with a medical pension. Ironically, he also received the British Empire Medal for his (supposedly) heroic role in the crash.

Four years passed. Green purchased a small used-car business, with a flat above the office, and tried to live an inconspicuous life, awaiting the call of his gods. Gradually he became aware of a growing craving for human flesh, which no normal food seemed to satisfy.

In 1969, Green was involved in a fight outside his local pub, and bit one of his assailants. The police arrived before any real harm was done; however, the taste of human flesh intensified the craving he felt, and he decided to take steps to satisfy his appetite before it betrayed his secrets.

A month later Green strangled a tramp on a bomb site near his house, and consumed portions of the body. He left the remains concealed in an old house on the site, intending to return for another feast the following night. However, the body had disappeared when he returned. Green followed bloodstains and heel marks to an old air-raid shelter behind the ruined house, and found a tunnel concealed by a sheet of corrugated iron. A familiar smell of food came from the tunnel, and Green realised that he has stumbled across a nest of ghouls.

Although Green couldn't control the ghouls, he decided to risk entering the tunnel and trying to make contact. He followed the scent through a twisting maze of old sewers and forgotten streams to their lair, a crypt under the local cemetery. The ghouls were still eating the tramp when he arrived, and somehow realised that he was responsible for their unusually fresh feast. They made him welcome, allowing him to share the meal. The next week he killed again, bringing another victim to the ghouls' banquet. Soon he was a member of the pack, and had learned to communicate with, and contact, his inhuman friends.



In subsequent years Green persuaded the group to worship the chthonians. When the local authority decided to build a block of flats on the bomb site, Green helped the ghouls close the original entrance and tunnel into the basement of the car showroom. His business gives him access to a range of cars and vans, and he finds it easy to pick up victims in and around London, and bring them back for the ghouls to kill. On average, they commit a murder every eight to ten days.

This lifestyle isn't without risks; Green has been injured twice by victims, and carries several unpleasant diseases and parasites, including serum hepatitis, salmonella and liver flukes. Green isn't bothered by these complaints, since he is slowly turning into a ghoul and already has their immunity to such conditions, but anyone he bites or attacks is likely to become infected. His transformation is only retarded by his reluctance to reduce his usefulness to the chthonians.

Last week Green was careless. After each murder he must dispose of human bones, clothing, and other debris, and he usually fills a plastic rubbish bag with these remains, takes an old car or van from his yard, and dumps the sack on a refuse tip several miles from his home. Unfortunately the bag split on his last outing, and he was forced to dump the contents quickly before anyone saw what he was carrying.

In his haste, he failed to notice that a finger bone was still in the boot of the car, and returned it to his yard without making a thorough inspection. Fomutesca bought the car the next morning, and found the bone while he was cleaning it.

Fomutesca suspected that it was a human bone, and took it back to the hospital where he was studying for analysis. Unfortunately he didn't report his discovery; instead, he decided to find out where it had come from, and returned to Green's garage to ask some questions.

Green realised his mistake, and decided to kill Fomutesca before he talked to the police or hospital officials. He explained that he had hired out the car several times before selling it, and offered to let Fomutesca take the names of his customers.

While Fomutesca was looking at the records, Green locked the building and called the ghouls from their tunnels. Green expected that they would easily kill Fomutesca, but underestimated his strength and agility. Fomutesca fled to the upper flat, and jumped through a window to escape from the ghouls.

Green and the ghouls couldn't chase Fomutesca in daylight, so they decided to pool their magic to curse him. This curse, known as the Curse of the Bone, has caused his injuries, though a process resembling psychosomatic illness, described in more detail below.

Despite his education, Fomutesca still retains some vestiges of tribal superstitions, and has lost sanity from his encounter with the ghouls. He is unable to explain what has happened, beyond saying that he was been cursed by 'demons', and will die after a few more attacks if the spell casting is not stopped.

Clues in the hospital and Fomutesca's flat should eventually lead the investigators to Green. He will attempt to appear innocent, but any determined investigation will lead to the exposure of his activities, and hence to the ghouls. If the group can be disrupted or destroyed Fomutesca will be freed from the curse, and slowly recover under suitable medical treatment.

Although this is actually a fairly simple adventure, you should remember that failure could have serious consequences. If Green knows that the investigators are interested in his activities, and has time to manoeuvre, they might be lured to an ambush, or become the next victims of the curse. If he is defeated but lives, he might eventually persuade the chthonians to take some retaliatory action. You should feel free to complicate the scenario by adding misdirection and confusing (but actually totally irrelevant) information. Several spurious clues and details have been included below.

If you are beginning a 1980s campaign you may wish to use this adventure to plant clues leading to later adventures. Green's location in London and his access to a wide range of vehicles make him a useful contact, and he might well be in touch with other cultists. A section at the end of the adventure gives some examples of the sort of clue that might be found.

Hospital Enquiries

Fomutesca is in no condition to answer questions, but Doctor Fowler is prepared to let investigators see him.

Fomutesca occupies a side room off the orthopaedic ward of the hospital. His left arm and right leg are in traction, his right shoulder is in plaster. His eyes are wide and staring, and he is almost unaware of anyone in the room. If he is approached he will whisper 'The bone... the bone...', and may also whisper 'Demons! They cursed me!'.

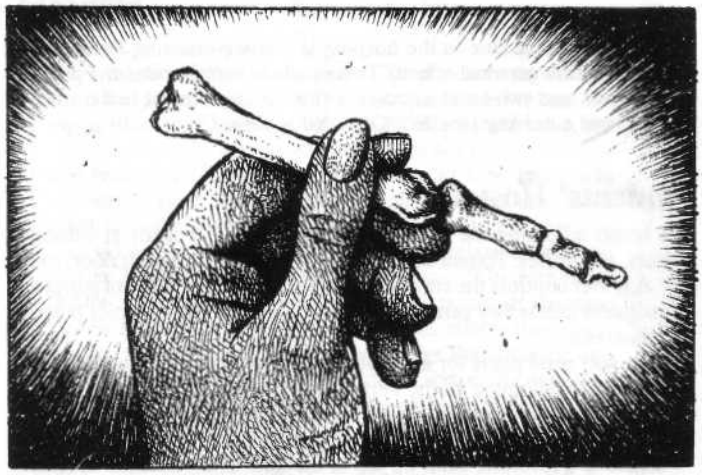
While the investigators are in the room he suddenly twitches and starts screaming. Doctors and nurses rush in, and discover that the radius of his right arm has snapped, apparently as a result of intense muscular spasms. They sedate him, and throw the investigators out of the room.

The investigators can also ask to see Fomutesca's medical and academic records at the hospital; again, Doctor Fowler will do her best to be helpful, and bypass the red tape involved in such enquiries. Her office computer is linked to the hospital's data base, and she or the investigators can call up these records by a successful Library Use roll.

Summary of medical report on Kerim Fomutesca

Fomutesca was born in Kenya in 1963, and has been a medical student in Britain since 1984. He is unmarried, and has no previous medical history. Blood group A Rh-, no distinguishing marks or physical abnormalities.

Last Wednesday Fomutesca was found unconscious in the lift of the student hostel adjoining the hospital. He was admitted to hospital, and found to have a broken left arm, plus skin cuts and abrasions. Fragments of glass were found in the cuts, suggesting that he had been the victim of a hit and run car accident. When he recovered consciousness it was discovered that he was suffering some form of anxiety attack, expressed as withdrawal from human contact, extreme fear, and muscular spasms. He has refused to answer questions, but occasionally mentions something called 'the bone' and says that he has been cursed by 'demons'. Since admission he has suffered two further fractures; a simple fracture of the right ankle, and a compound fracture of the left shoulder blade. All these injuries are consistent with extreme psychosomatic illness, causing fractures through muscular spasms exhibiting 'hysterical'



strength. Clinical causes for the spasms, such as tetanus, have been ruled out by bacteriological tests. He has been referred to Doctor Fowler for psychological evaluation.

Since he was admitted, it has been determined that the glass fragments found in his cuts were window glass, rather than any form of windscreen or headlight glass.

Summary of academic report on Kerim Fomutesca

Fomutesca is an average student, and has passed all examinations to date without achieving any notably high marks. He has expressed an interest in forensic science, and intends to specialise in this field after graduating.

Investigators making a Computer Use roll can set up a search program to find all records which mention Fomutesca, whether or not they are listed under his name. This procedure will find the following memorandum in the Pathology department records, dated on Thursday of last week:

From: Dr. T. Edgerton
To: Fomutesca, Kerim (Student)
Reference: Bone sample 14352 (identification request)
This specimen is the middle phalange (finger bone) of the forefinger of a human aged 18-25 (established by evaluation of calcium deposits), blood group O Rh+. Fragments of adhering flesh, and other pathological indicators, suggest that it was severed approximately five days before examination. The absence of skin and muscular fibres, and indentations in the bone itself, suggest that it was attacked by rodents or other scavengers after it was severed.

Please note that you have not filled in the patient record number for this specimen. Please do so immediately.

A print-out of this memo is in the communal letter rack of the students' hostel, addressed to Fomutesca.

If questioned, Doctor Edgerton can't add much to this report, but can show the bone to investigators. If pressed, he will admit that it appears to have been gnawed, possibly by something as large as a dog or a pig. It is, as already stated, a normal human finger bone with no unusual properties.

If it is shown to Fomutesca he will react violently, screaming until he is sedated, and lose 3 SAN.

The only other clue in the hospital is a box containing Fomutesca's wallet and other personal effects. These include various pens and pencils, a calculator, and two keys; a door key (for his appartment in the student hostel), and a car key labelled 'GLE 36J — Min Coop'.

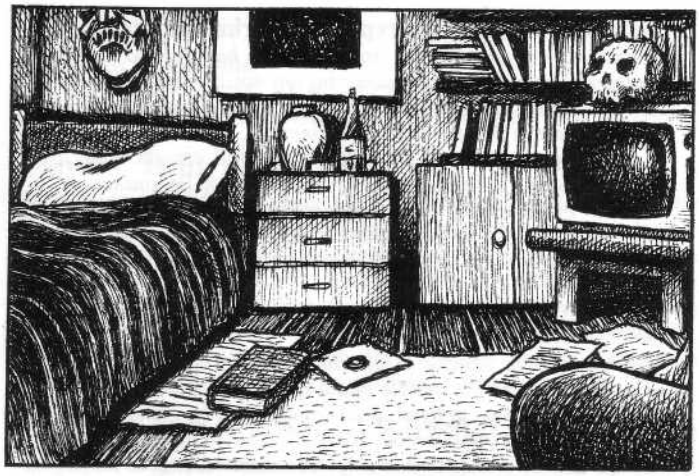
Students' Hostel

The hostel adjoining the hospital accommodates 221 medical students, doctors, and nurses. Fomutesca has an apartment on the eighth floor, room 812. A porter controls the entrance to this building, and will not admit the investigators unless they carry a note of authorisation from a senior hospital administrator.

You will need plans for a simple two-room apartment, with a small bedroom and adjoining study. Personal belongings in the room include a portable television, a record player, some classical records, medical books and notes, a typewriter, and an assortment of clothing and junk.

There is a revolting skull on top of the television, covered in rotting flesh and dried blood. A close examination will reveal that the skull is plastic, a stage prop for use in the students' Rag Week.

A large African mask hangs over the bed, made of wood and leather with bead and feather ornamentation. It is a genuine tribal magician's mask, a souvenir of Fomutesca's home, but has no magical or occult powers, and no Mythos significance.



There are several letters stored in the desk drawer in the study, written in a French dialect with Bantu loan words. A 'Read French' roll at -10% is required to learn that they are just family gossip, sent by Fomutesca's mother.

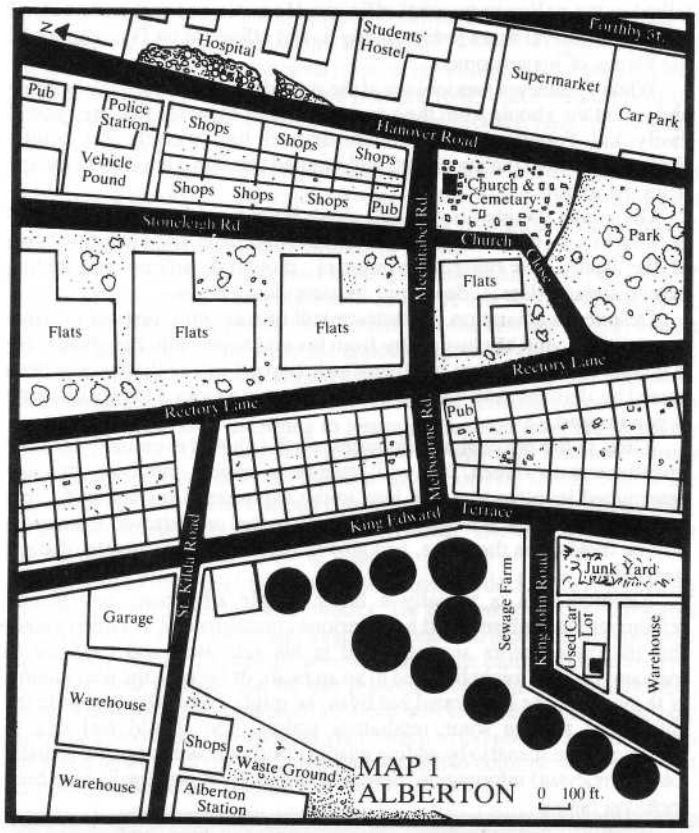
The only real clue in the flat is Fomutesca's bank book, which is kept in another desk drawer. It records that he withdrew £150 on the Monday of the week he fell ill (to pay for the car). The car's log book and MOT certificate have been sent for re-registration, and are not in the flat. An insurance certificate will arrive in the post an hour after the investigators search the flat, and will be left in Fomutesca's letter box.

If the investigators don't know about the car they will learn nothing more. There is a 25% chance that any student questioned will know that Fomutesca bought an old car before he fell ill. However, none of the students will know its number or type. The porter knows that Fomutesca has been allocated a parking space, and can identify the car (an ancient Mini-Cooper), which hasn't been moved since Fomutesca was admitted to hospital. You should decide if he will mention this if the investigators ask about Fomutesca without specifically mentioning the car.

GLE 36J

The evidence provided should easily lead the investigators to a battered old car parked beside the students hostel. On a Spot Hidden roll investigators will notice that the boot is slightly open. A dustpan and brush are in the boot, and the spare tyre is out of its usual socket. Investigators making an Idea roll will realise that this implies that someone was interrupted while cleaning out the boot. There are minute smears of blood (group O+) on the spare tyre, but they will only be found by someone who is looking for them with a magnifying glass and makes a Spot Hidden roll.

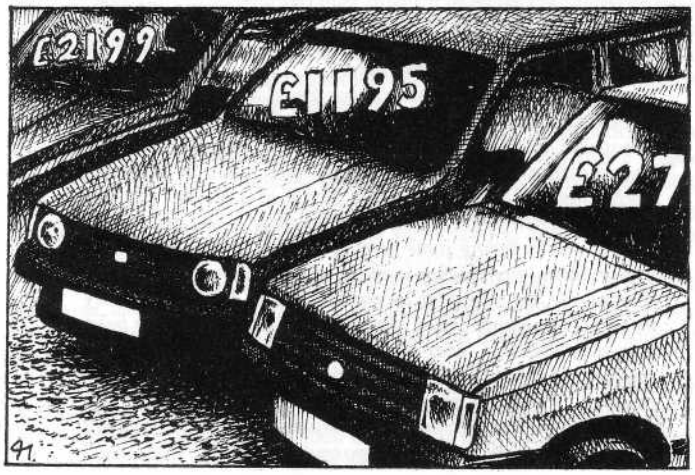
The passenger compartment of the car is clean, and the engine is in reasonable tune. There is no radio, and some of the dashboard instruments are cracked (though all work). The glove compartment holds a pair of leather driving gloves (belonging to Fomutesca), a bag of mints, an unopened packet of cigarettes, and a few cards.



The cards are for various businesses around the area (see map 1): **Hai Fong's Chinese Restaurant** at 14 Hanover Road, **The Rex Garage** in St. Kilda Road, **The Old Bull** public house in Rectory Lane, **Green's Used Cars** in King John Road, and **The Stoneleigh Laundrette** in Stoneleigh Road. The car lot is, of course, the only significant address amongst these cards; Green routinely puts a few trade cards in every car he sells, for a small fee. The other cards are meaningless, but could lead to some amusing complications; it's possible that the innocent proprietor of a Chinese takeaway restaurant might somehow seem to be a sinister Oriental, and the pub has some criminal connections which might arouse the investigators suspicions. Sooner or later, however, the investigators should arrive at Green's used car lot.

The Used Car Lot

This is an entirely normal lot, somewhat isolated by its location between a junk yard and a sewage farm. There is a chainlink wire fence (STR 25) around the lot, topped with barbed wire, with two entrance gates (both open by day). If cut with bolt cutters or other suitable tools it has an effective strength of 8. At any given time there are 20+3D6 cars on the lot, all for sale. Green doesn't specialise in any particular type of car, but won't have anything really expensive on offer. He tries to drive a hard bargain. He will approach the investigators as soon as they enter the lot.



Eric Green: Used car dealer and cultist, male, aged 49, British, residence London.

STR	14	**DEX**	15	**INT**	13	**IDEA**	65	**DAMAGE BONUS**	+1D4
CON	17	**APP**	12	**POW**	17	**LUCK**	85	**MAGIC POINTS**	17
SIZ	13	**SAN**	0	**EDU**	11	**KNOW**	55	**HIT POINTS**	15

Skills: Accounting 15, Astronomy (Astro-navigation) 25, Bargain 35, Cthulhu Mythos 34, Dodge 50, Drive Auto 35, Drive Motorcycle 25, Electrical Repair 35, Fast Talk 25, Hide 25, Linguist 30, Make Maps 25, Martial Arts 25, Mechanical Repair 35, Occult 30, Pilot Aircraft 30, Sneak 45, Speak Ghoul 30, Speak Pidgin 40, Spot Hidden 40, Track 20, Zoology 10.

Equipment: Selection of cars, vans, motorcycles, tools. Carries keys to flat, office, desk, safe, etc.

Weapons: Sword Stick 35%, 20-Gauge Shotgun (in flat) 45%, Bite 27% (damage 1D4+1D4 plus 10% chance of disease), all hand to hand attacks 40%.

Spells: Curse of the Bone (see below), Contact Chthonian, Contact Ghoul.

Notes: Green looks like any other used car salesman; dapper and slightly pushy. He always wears a three-piece suit (regardless of weather), and seems to be incapable of hearing the word 'no'. He has a pale white scar on his left hand, and walks with a pronounced limp. A wide red scar on his left arm, and a large tattoo on his chest, are usually covered by clothing. The tattoo is the work of a tribal shaman, and depicts a chthonian devouring a sacrifice. Anyone seeing it must make a SAN roll to avoid losing 1D3 SAN.

If Green realises that the investigators are a threat he will attempt to trick them into another line of enquiry (for example, if they mention Fomutesca he will suggest that the African communities of London might be more helpful). He might also attempt to attach himself to the team, saying that he hasn't seen any action since he left the RAF, then lead them on a completely false trail, and arrange a few 'accidents'.

If his ploy fails, but the investigators leave, he will summon the ghouls and cast the Curse of the Bone repeatedly, until he is sure that Fomutusca must be dead. He will then start to cast the spell at investigators, and prepare for an attack or burglary attempt.

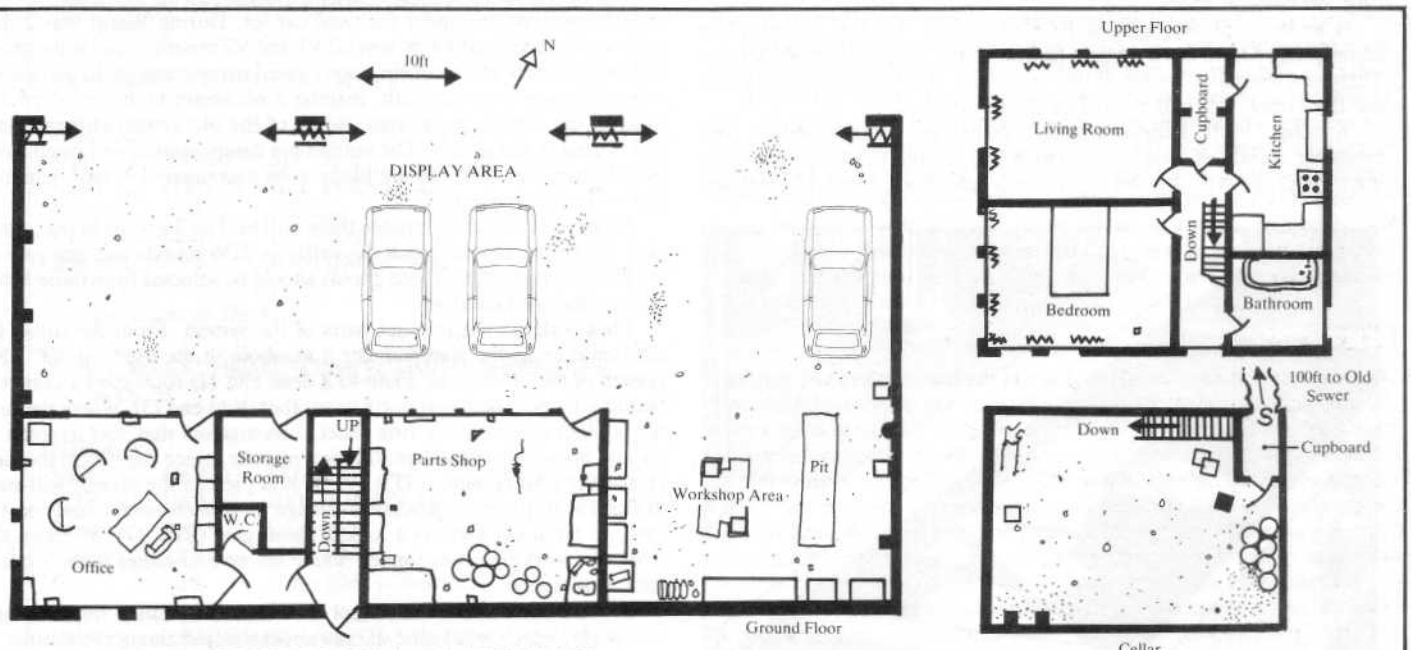
New Spell - Curse of the Bone: This spell turns the victims body against itself. The magic points used to cast the spell must overcome the victim's POW. If successful, the victims muscles spasm, and break a major bone, provided the ***victim's*** STR overcomes the ***victim's*** CON. Each time a bone breaks a SAN roll must be made or the victim loses 1D4 SAN (provided he or she is conscious). Victims who are sedated or treated with strong muscle relaxants will still suffer broken bones if ***half*** the victims STR overcomes CON. Each broken bone does 1D6+1 points of damage. While this spell is less immediate in its effects than some spells of the Mythos, it has the advantage that it can be cast in the absence of the victim, and has an apparently unlimited range. Naturally the caster of the spell must know the victim's name and appearance, or at the very least must have a sample of the victim's clothing, skin, or hair.

If investigators haven't already visited the Old Bull public house, the following incident will occur. A black Jaguar XJ-6 roars onto the lot while Green is talking to the investigators, and two hard-looking men in grey business suits enter his office (described below). Green leaves the investigators and walks inside, talks to the men, and gives them some money. They drive away. Green won't explain what these visitors want. Investigators who Spot Hidden can take the car numbers and attempt to trace it through the licencing authorities, or cruise nearby streets in hopes of finding it.

The car is registered to Christopher Grove, licensee of the Old Bull public house in Rectory Lane. He and his brother Peter are local racketeers, specialising in protection and fencing stolen goods. Green feels that the fee he pays them is acceptable, and occasionally sells them valuables he has found on his victims. If the players wish to follow up this incident, you will need plan of a small public house. The Grove brothers and their mistresses live in a flat above the pub, and keep stolen goods in the cellar. There should be at least two or three thugs in the pub at any time, acting as bouncers when they aren't needed for less legal work. The Grove brothers and their thugs are naturally hostile to inquisitive strangers.

The only building on the lot is a brick structure built in the late 1940s **Plan 2**. It consists of a garage and office, with a small apartment perched on its flat roof. The roof is only 11′ above the ground, and active characters should be able to climb up without difficulty.

The **Display Area** has room for six cars, but usually holds four or five cars and a few motorcycles. The front of this area can be closed by six folding metal gates, which retract into support pillars at the front of the building. These gates have STR 50, and are closed electrically by a key switch in Green's office. There is no way of unlocking them from outside the building.



PLAN 2 CAR SHOWROOM & APARTMENT

Green carries out routine repairs in the **Service Area**, which has a hydraulic jack, a grease pit, tools, and other normal garage facilities. He refers major repairs to a service station (not shown on map 1). A small **Parts shop** contains second-hand components for most British cars; Green buys them from the adjoining junk yard, cleans them, and sells them 200—400% profit.

A locked **Store Room** holds a variety of junk, including oil drums, engine parts, car seats and tyres. There is a plastic rubbish sack in one of the oil drums, containing more gnawed human bones (the remains of a woman aged 25-30), plus torn bloodstained clothing, hair, and skin fragments. Anyone looking into the bag must make a SAN roll or lose 1D6 SAN. The sack has been sprayed with air freshner, and is covered in oil; there is no smell to reveal its contents until it is opened.

The **office** holds equipment typical of any small business; a typewriter and telephone, directories and calculators, four filing cabinets, and a few chairs. A locked safe (SF) holds £3400 in mixed notes and coinage, and is a good place to plant clues leading to future adventures. A telex (TX) prints out occasional requests for cars or components, sent by other dealers. There is a framed photograph of Green in RAF uniform on the wall. His medal is in another frame on the wall. The dates on the medal can be used to find the public version of Green's story, as recorded in newspaper articles in 1964.

The office is carpeted, and the desk stands on a round rug. If the rug is removed, a suspiciously clean area of carpet is revealed. This area was bloodstained, but carpet shampoo has removed the evidence.

Keys to the cars, vans, and cycles on the lot are kept in a locked box in the desk. A switch on the wall operates the electrical doors to the display area, but a key (carried by Green) is needed to operate it. The cable to this switch is buried in the wall.

Visitors won't normally be admitted to other parts of the building, unless Green wishes to kill them, but he tries to maintain an appearance of normality for official callers (police, VAT inspectors, electricity meter readers, etc).

The rest of the ground floor consists of a short corridor, giving access to a lavatory and to stairs leading to the flat and cellar. Fuse boxes and an electricity meter are installed in this corridor, all are locked in STR 18 cases.

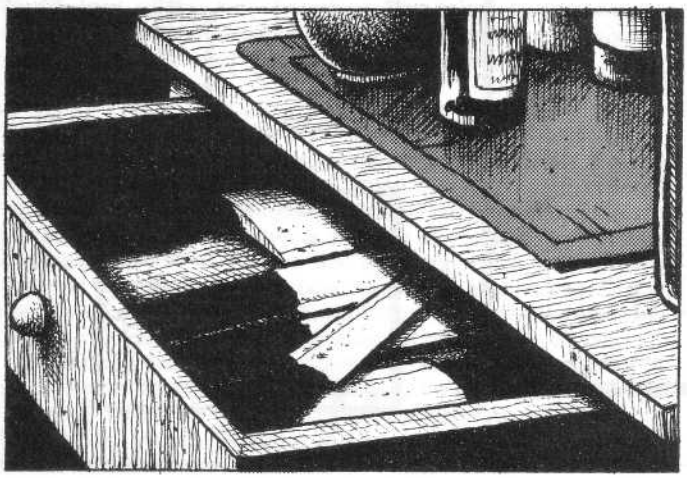
The door to the staircase, and an outside door behind the building, are always kept locked. Inner doors have STR 11, the outer door has STR 25. Green carries the only keys.

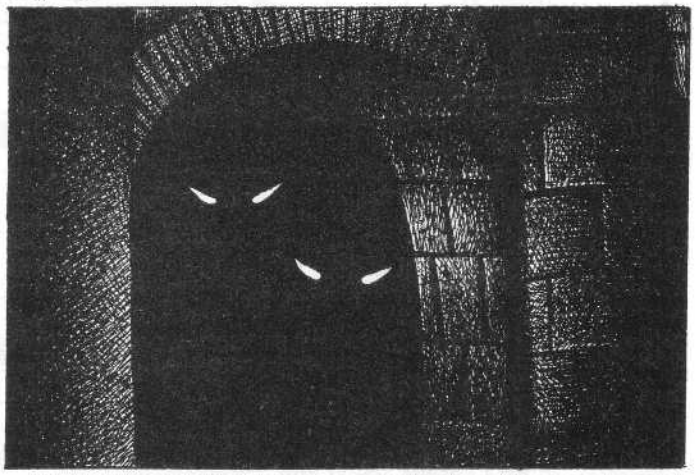
The flat above the office is compact but comfortably furnished. A narrow staircase leads to a hall linking the living room, bedroom, kitchen, and bathroom.

The **living room** shows no obvious signs of any sinister activities. Shelves contain books on different models of car, a few novels (pornography, spies, and adventure), and some road maps and directories. None have any significance to this adventure. Other furniture includes a television, radio, cocktail cabinet, and a fish tank. Investigators with Zoology skill will recognise the fish as piranha. There are a few small bones at the bottom of the tank; another Zoology roll will reveal that they are chicken bones.

A locked cupboard holds a 20-gauge double-barelled shotgun, and ammunition. Green has a shotgun certificate and owns the weapon legally. There is a telephone on top of this cupboard. If investigators break into the flat Green will call the police then start shooting.

A drawer in the **bedroom** holds a few rings, watches, wallets, and bracelets, mostly of little value, which Green stole from his victims. If questioned, he will say that these items have been found in cars, and are kept for anyone who wishes to reclaim them. Forensic scientists will be able to find traces of blood on several of these items, in a number of groups.





The **bathroom** is tiled throughout, and has been the scene of several grisly murders. Bars inside the translucent window are the only obvious oddity. A complete police examination will find traces of hair and flesh in the bath trap, and a broken tooth in the crack between the bath and the wall.

A **cupboard** in the hall holds tools and household equipment and junk, mostly irrelevant to this adventure. These include a supply of rubbish bags, a mop, plastic sheeting, and a spade. All are clean, since Green tries to avoid leaving traces of his activities.

The **kitchen** contains conclusive evidence of Green's cannibalism, though it is well concealed. A freezer near the door holds joints of meat; buried under more conventional cuts are a human leg, a plastic bag of ribs, and an arm. All have been skinned, and identification requires a Zoology skill roll. Anyone making such identification must make a SAN roll or lose 1D4 SAN. Butcher knives and cleavers kept in a drawer of the kitchen table have faint traces of blood in the cracks where the wooden handle joins the blade.

The cupboard adjoining the kitchen is a pantry, and contains nothing to interest investigators. Green still eats vegetables and other foods, and they are stored in this room.

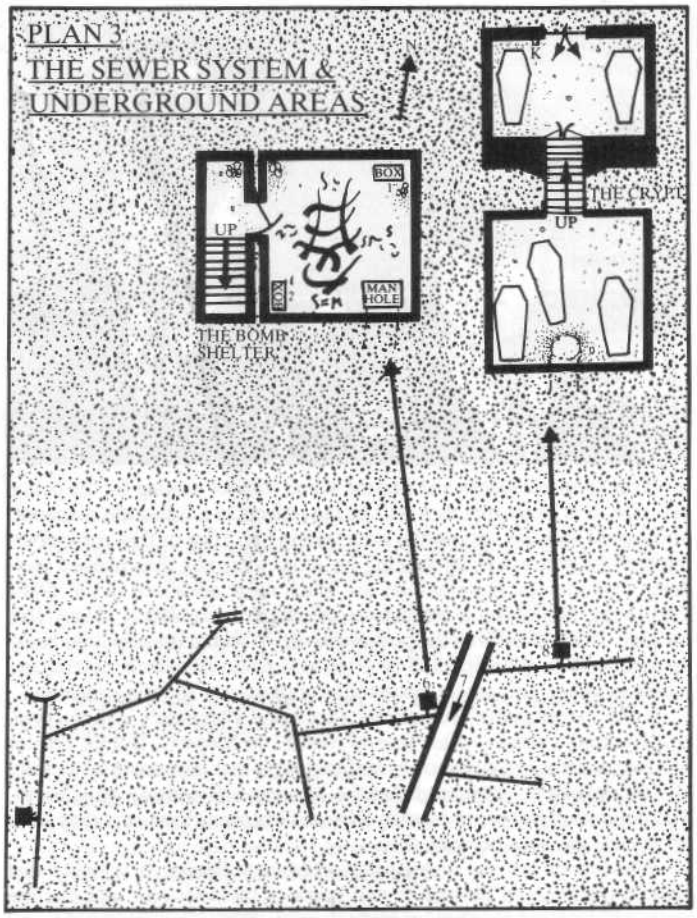
The **cellar** below the building dates back to World War 2, and was originally a small air-raid shelter. The light doesn't work. The room is packed with old tyres, boxes, car components, and junk. Narrow gaps in the rubbish lead to an old cupboard under the stairs. There are faint brown bloodstains on the cupboard floor, and there is a faint damp musty smell. Investigators who Spot Hidden in this cupboard will realise that its rear wall is made of a sheet of plywood, and can be opened as a secret door.

The tunnel behind the cupboard runs north-east for thirty feet, to join an old sewer system under the used car lot. During World War 2 this area was bombed and hit by several V1 and V2 missiles, and subsequent building projects and reconstruction caused many changes. In particular, a large sewage farm was built, making it necessary to divert or replace most of the sewers in the area. Some of the old system still remains, and is used by the ghouls. The tunnels are damp, humid, and smell from their former use. 2D6 rats are likely to be encountered in each hundred feet of tunnel explored.

If Green is expecting trouble there will be 2 or 3 ghouls in the tunnel near the cellar, able to reach the cellar in 2D6 rounds and any part of the building thereafter. These ghouls should be selected from those listed below (but not Ghoul 4).

Plan 3 shows the relevant parts of the system. From the cellar **(1)** the tunnel joins the sewer, under a manhole in the used car lot. This branch of the sewer runs south to a dead end **(2)** (blocked by concrete building foundations) and north to another dead end **(3)**, where the tunnel is blocked by a rusty iron sheet. Investigators may feel tempted to try and breach this blockage; this is a mistake, since the iron is the side of a sewer settling tank, (STR 19). If it is pierced the system will start to flood with partially processed sewage. A branch tunnel leads north-east. At point **(4)** there is a locked metal gate (STR 17), 5′ above the floor of a working sewer tunnel. There are several routes to the surface from this tunnel.

Several branches of the tunnel are blocked by fallen masonry and debris **(5)**, which will collapse onto anyone stupid enough to attempt to dig through. Another branch of the tunnel runs past a side tunnel (leading to the old air-raid shelter, **(6)**, and enters an old arched masonry tunnel



covering an underground stream (7). The old air-raid shelter is a concrete structure under the grounds of the new block of flats adjoining Church Close. The ghouls enter and leave through a manhole in the concrete floor, joining the old sewer through a 3′ high tunnel. At any time there will be 1D4 ghouls in the main chamber, which is used for their cult rituals.

Ghoul 1:

STR 18	**CON** 16	**SIZ** 14	**INT** 10
POW 14	**DEX** 11	**HIT POINTS** 15	
Weapon	Attk%	Damage	
Claws	30%	1D6+1D4	
Bite	30%	1D6+1D4 + Worry	

Skills: Sneak 85, Hide 56, Listen 65, Spot Hidden 55, Climb 87, Jump 73

Equipment: 30′ rope, flick knife

Ghoul 2:

STR 15	**CON** 17	**SIZ** 16	**INT** 11
POW 12	**DEX** 10	**HIT POINTS** 16	
Weapon	Attk%	Damage	
Claws	31%	1D6+1D4	
Bite	33%	1D6+1D4 + Worry	

Spells: Curse of the Bone

Skills: Sneak 87, Hide 62, Listen 71, Spot Hidden 50, Climb 88, Jump 75

Ghoul 3:

STR 17	**CON** 13	**SIZ** 13	**INT** 13
POW 14	**DEX** 13	**HIT POINTS** 13	
Weapon	Attk%	Damage	
Claws	32%	1D6+1D4	
Bite	30%	1D6+1D4 + Worry	

Skills: Sneak 80, Hide 60, Listen 70, Spot Hidden 50, Climb 85, Jump 75

Ghoul 4:

STR 18	**CON** 17	**SIZ** 10	**INT** 15
POW 18	**DEX** 11	**HIT POINTS** 13	
Weapon	Attk%	Damage	
Claws	45%	1D6+1D4	
Bite	47%	1D6+1D4 + Worry	

Spells: Curse of the Bone, Contact Chthonian, Contact Ghoul, Elder Sign, Shrivelling, Enchant Bone Flute, Enchant Bone Knife, Flute Ritual

Skills: Sneak 92, Hide 74, Listen 80, Spot Hidden 65, Climb 80, Jump 70

Equipment: flute, bone knife, key (see below)

Ghoul 4 is the shaman of this group, and has progressed beyond Green in its knowledge and use of the Mythos. It carries an unusual item which may be important in this scenario:

Bone Flute: This artifact is a carved human arm bone, cunningly formed into a musical instrument. It is used for the ***Flute Ritual***, a spell which causes a form of illusory invisibility. This spell takes four combat rounds to cast. The magic points expended in casting the spell oppose the POW of anyone seeing the caster. If the observers POW is overcome, the caster seems to be someone who should be present. The effect continues as long as the flute is played. Casting this spell costs a point of SAN. *Example:* Green decides that Fomutesca must be killed quickly, and asks this ghoul to arrange the death. It casts the spell then walks into the hospital, where it is seen as a doctor or nurse by everyone who encounters it. Naturally, the spell caster will not be disguised on film or video recordings. The bone knife carried by this ghoul is coated with a potency five poison. Keepers who are interested in extending this adventure should consider the possibility that ghoul 4 has been entrusted with the egg of a chthonian, and is guarding it while it incubates and eventually hatches under London. If this option is chosen, it will be aided by other ghouls of similar calibre, and the egg will be stored well away from the initial setting of this adventure.

The floor of the chamber is comparatively clean, but is marked in a pattern of lines (drawn in blood) used for their rituals. Two boxes, made of cunningly joined human bone, contain some equipment used in the rituals:

Box 1 holds four sharp knives, made of carved human bone (at least 60 years old), and a drum made of human bone with a membrane of human skin. They do not have any magical properties.

Box 2 holds nine candles made of human fat, and an axe made from a sharpened human thigh bone. They are also non-magical.

The smaller room adjoining the main air-raid shelter was originally the exit, a staircase up to ground level. The door hasn't been opened since 1972, and the top of the stairs is closed off by a sheet of corrugated iron. If this is pulled down, a mixture of old bricks, masonry, and rubbish will fall into the stairs. Anyone failing to dodge takes 2D6 damage. If you feel kind there are only a few inches of rubble, topped by soil and roots, and the stairs emerge on a lawn beside the flats.

If you aren't so generous, the rubble is part of the foundations of the block of flats, and is covered by a sheet of reinforced concrete (STR 300+) which is effectively invulnerable to any reasonably portable equipment likely to be carried.

The underground stream (7) east of the air-raid shelter runs south towards central London. It is one of several streams which were originally open waterways, but were closed off and forgotten in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was used as a sewer until the 1940s, and the tunnel still smells of sewage. The water moves slowly, and is roughly 2′ deep. This stream can be followed North or South; both directions eventually lead to branch tunnels and sewers, which gradually narrow until investigators can go no further. The keeper should feel free to add more ghoul colonies, but no other Mythos creatures, living along this stream and its tributories. Other possibilities include alligators, giant rats, and rat packs.

The ghouls lair is (naturally) under the churchyard east of Green's car lot. A crudely dug tunnel leads from another old sewer to the floor

of the old crypt **(8)**, which is under a massive Victorian monument near the north-west corner of the cemetery. There are three coffins in the lower crypt, and stairs lead up to a surface structure containing two more. All the coffins are filled with gnawed bones, dating from the nineteenth century to the present day. The top of the staircase from the lower crypt is closed by wrough-iron gates (STR 39); Green has fitted a new padlock and chain, to keep intruders out of the crypt; he carries one key, the ghoul shaman carries another. The upper chamber of the crypt isn't normally used by the ghouls, and is closed by heavy iron doors. These doors are locked, but a key hangs on a peg (K) to the left of the doors. This tomb belonged to the Robinsons, a prominent 19th-century banking family of the area; their descendents still live nearby, and will be horrified by any damage to the tomb.

Including the four ghouls described above, a total of seven ghouls occupy this tomb. All those which have not been eliminated before this tomb is found will be present when (and if) the investigators reach it:

Ghoul 5:

STR 15	**CON** 17	**SIZ** 15	**INT** 12
POW 14	**DEX** 15	**HIT POINTS** 16	
Weapon	Attk%	Damage	
Claws	32%	1D6+1D4	
Bite	37%	1D6+1D4 + Worry	

Skills: Sneak 82, Hide 61, Listen 65, Spot Hidden 56, Climb 85, Jump 75

Ghoul 6:

STR 17	**CON** 13	**SIZ** 13	**INT** 13
POW 12	**DEX** 16	**HIT POINTS** 13	
Weapon	Attk%	Damage	
Claws	31%	1D6+1D4	
Bite	30%	1D6+1D4 + Worry	

Spells: Curse of the Bone, Contact cthonian, Voorish Sign, Shrivelling

Skills: Sneak 80, Hide 54, Listen 70, Spot Hidden 50, Climb 85, Jump 72

Ghoul 7:

STR 15	**CON** 16	**SIZ** 15	**INT** 17
POW 15	**DEX** 15	**HIT POINTS** 15	
Weapon	Attk%	Damage	
Claws	36%	1D6+1D4	
Bite	33%	1D6+1D4 + Worry	

Spells: Flute Ritual

Skills: Sneak 80, Hide 65, Listen 70, Spot Hidden 50, Climb 85, Jump 75

Equipment: Bone Flute

If you feel that the investigators have beaten the ghouls too easily, it is always possible that more might be lurking in the underground stream, or occupy other tombs in the cemetary. However, the cemetery has been fully occupied since the 1930s, and it is unlikely that ghouls would find enough fresh food to stay here without some other powerful motive.

Finishing this Adventure

If the investigators succeed in defeating Green and the ghouls, they may still have difficulty in explaining their actions to the police, press, and public.

If the team kill Green and can't produce concrete evidence of his activities, they will probably be hunted down by the police and arrested for murder. How ghoul carcasses will be explained is left to their imagination; however, it's likely that the authorities will ask for silence, for fear of arousing a panic. Of course, this explanation might cover some deeper mystery; perhaps a Cultist is active somewhere in the government, using this excuse to suppress knowledge of the Mythos. In this case the investigators may find that they have somehow been included on a police black list, likely to be hauled in for questioning whenever something mysterious happens.

If the team kill Green and flee the scene without waiting for the police to arrive, it is likely that they will be the objects of a full-scale manhunt. You should note any actions the team take in his office or flat, remembering that the police will be looking for clues after any unexplained incident. Criminological techniques are much more advanced in the 1980s than in the 1920s, and a murderous investigator is unlikely to stay free for long. If shots are fired the police will arrive within minutes, and back-up tems will be accompanied by dogs, sharp-shooters, helicopters, and whatever other equipment seems appropriate to a shooting incident.

If the investigators are entirely successful Fomutesca will survive, and eventually recover after several months in hospital. Doctor Fowler will help to treat anyone who has suffered SAN loss, and could be a useful ally (if she can be persuaded that the Mythos isn't entirely imaginary). The police will be able to identify 2D6 of Green's victims, and thus clear up several missing persons files.

Whether or not the investigators receive publicity, it is likely that various members of the police will know of their actions, and that the news will leak out to other interested parties. This notoriety might well lead to involvement in future adventures.

Characters

While Green and the ghouls are the most important NPCs of this scenario, it is possible that the keeper will need data on others; the descriptions below list those skills most important to this scenario, and the keeper should not hestitate to add additional skills wheich seem useful in the course of play:

Kerim Fomutesca: Medical student, male, age 26, Kenyan, residence London.

STR 16	**DEX** 15	**INT** 13	**IDEA** 65	**DAMAGE BONUS**	+1D4
CON 12	**APP** 12	**POW** 8	**LUCK** 40	**MAGIC POINTS**	8
SIZ 10	**SAN** 26	**EDU** 17	**KNOW** 85	**HIT POINTS**	4 (11)

Skills: Botany 35, Chemistry 25, Diagnose Disease 25, Fist Aid 30, Library Use 40, Linguist 25, Occult 10, Pharmacy 25, Psychology 10, Read/Write English 65, Speak English 50, Speak Bantu 65, Speak French 50, Treat Disease 25, Treat Poison 30.

Notes: Fomutesca can play no active part in this scenario, but might be a useful contact in later adventures.

Dr. Erica Fowler: Psychologist, female, age 32, British, residence London.

STR 12	**DEX** 14	**INT** 17	**IDEA** 85	**DAMAGE BONUS**	–
CON 12	**APP** 16	**POW** 15	**LUCK** 75	**MAGIC POINTS**	15
SIZ 12	**SAN** 75	**EDU** 20	**KNOW** 95	**HIT POINTS**	12

Skills: Botany 45, Chemistry 55, Computer Use 25, Diagnose Disease 45, First Aid 60, Library Use 65, Pharmacy 25, Psychoanalysis 55, Psychology 65, Treat Disease 45, Treat Poison 55, Zoology 40

Equipment: Hospital facilities.

Notes: Dr. Fowler is a hard-headed rationalist, and won't easily believe in the occult or the Cthulhu Mythos. However, a dead ghoul or other hard proof will change her mind.

Dr. Tom Edgerton: Forensic Scientist, male, age 50, British, residence London.

STR	15	DEX	14	INT	15	IDEA	75	DAMAGE BONUS	+1D4
CON	16	APP	16	POW	15	LUCK	75	MAGIC POINTS	15
SIZ	16	SAN	75	EDU	21	KNOW	95	HIT POINTS	12

Skills: Botany 55, Chemistry 85, Computer Use, 45, Diagnose Disease 60, First Aid 30, Library Use 75, Pharmacy 45, Psychoanalysis 15, Psychology 15, Treat Disease 20, Treat Poison 45, Zoology 60.

Equipment: Full laboratory facilities

Notes: Another rationalist, who can be an invaluable ally if adventures involve many medical clues.

Hai Fong: Restaurateur, male, age 32, born Hong Kong (British nationality), residence London.

STR	11	DEX	17	INT	13	IDEA	65	DAMAGE BONUS	–
CON	13	APP	10	POW	11	LUCK	55	MAGIC POINTS	8
SIZ	8	SAN	26	EDU	14	KNOW	70	HIT POINTS	10

Skills: Cook 55, Martial Arts 45, Occult 10, Read/Write English 25, Speak English 25.

Note: Martial art skill doubless the base damage caused by hand to hand attacks (fists, head butt, kick, or grapple) but does not increase damage bonuses from strength. Martial arts can also be used to parry melee weapon attacks, on a roll against the skill percentage.

Weapons: Assorted meat cleavers, skewers, knives, and hands.

Notes: Hai Fong is an entirely innocent fast-food cook, with no desire to be involved in other activities. He also happens to be a student at the local martial arts club. Sadistic keepers may wish to add his wife and one or more children, all having similar Martial Arts skills, if the investigators are violent to him.

Christopher Grove & Peter Grove: Gangsters, male, ages 30 and 35, British, residence London.

STR	16	DEX	14	INT	10	IDEA	50	DAMAGE BONUS	+1D4
CON	16	APP	10	POW	10	LUCK	50	MAGIC POINTS	5
SIZ	17	SAN	75	EDU	11	KNOW	55	HIT POINTS	16

Skills: Accounting 10, Drive Auto 55, Revolver 45, Cosh (nightstick) 55, Shotgun 40, Fists 70, Kick 40, Grapple 35, Wood axe 30.

Equipment: Assorted spades, pick-axes, hammers, etc. Jaguar XJ-6 (shared), van (shared).

Weapons: (shared)
4 Sawn-off 12-Gauge shotguns
2 .45 revolvers
6 pickaxe handles
6 pairs knuckle dusters

Notes: The Grove brothers are thugs, but won't bother to attack anyone who isn't bothering them. They will only be dangerous if they think that investigators are nosy, endanger their business, or seem likely to cause problems. It's possible, but unlikely, that the investigators and the Grove brothers might form an alliance. This is an unwise move, since they are often under police observation. They might also be a source of weapons and other illegal equipment. However, they would probably inform on the investigators if they were involved in murder or any other serious crime that could attract unwelcome police attention.

Bouncers: Assorted ages, usually British.
Three thugs will be found at the pub, the brothers could find another 2D4 within an hour.

STR	17	DEX	14	INT	6	IDEA	30	DAMAGE BONUS	+1D6
CON	16	APP	10	POW	10	LUCK	50	MAGIC POINTS	5
SIZ	18	SAN	75	EDU	7	KNOW	35	HIT POINTS	17

Skills: Drive Auto 30, Revolver 15, Cosh (nightstick) 25, Shotgun 35, Fists 55, Kick 40, Grapple 30.

Equipment: Usually provided by Grove brothers. Most will own cars or vans.

Weapons: Any melee weapon (eg pickaxe handles, coshes, broken bottles, beer mugs, etc).

Notes: These thugs simply obey orders; they aren't likely to do much without instructions. There is a 25% chance that any one of the thugs is a police informant.

Modern Investigators

A few modern skills can be extremely useful for a 1980s campaign. The skills which follow have previously appeared in *Cthulhu Now* (White Dwarf 43-43) but are presented here as redefined by Chaosium Inc.

Computer Use: Base skill 0%. The investigator knows the basic principles of computer operating and programming. Successful use of the skill allows the creation of a program, checking the computer's systems, etc. Difficult tasks, such as 'hacking' (breaking into a protected network) should receive negative modifiers.

Drive Motorcycle: Base 5%. A minimum of 20% skill is required to operate a bike routinely under normal road conditions; use at lower skill levels should require frequent skill checks.

Electronics: Base Skill 0%. The character can identify and use electronic components to make repairs, trace circuitry, etc.

Nuclear Physics: Base Skill 0%. The character has theoretical and/or practical knowledge of this subject and can apply it to problems such as radiation-proofing a room, the defusing (or assembly) of home-made atomic weapons, etc.

Pharmacy: Modified. Now includes the ability to identify narcotics, hallucinogens, and other illicit drugs.

Phone Breaking: Base 0%. The character can manipulate the public telephone system to obtain a line without charge, discover ex-directory numbers, or route a call through several exchanges to make tracing impossible. Use of this skill may require employment of other skills such as Electronics (to build special equipment), Computer Use, etc.

Pilot Aircraft: Base 0%. Modified. Normal skill only applies to piston-engined conventional aircraft. If skill with helicopters or jets is desired, a pre-requisite is a minimum of 30% normal piloting skill. A minimum of 20% skill is required to pilot any modern aircraft.

Treat Poison: Modified. Now includes the ability to deal with drug overdoses, bad 'trips', etc.

DRAGONLANCE

14 Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Adventures TSR £85.80 (in total)

No dragons had existed on Krynn for over 1000 years. In fact few people believed that they had ever existed in anything but folk-tales or stories to frighten small children. True, legend told of the the great hero Huma who had fought the fearsome beasts with the aid of the Dragonlances. He had defeated the dark queen, Takhisis, and driven the dragons from the face of the earth, but this was surely poetic flight of fancy. Mention dragons and the people would just smile. That was, until the dragons returned...

Ansalon had been a civilised and more or less peaceful place since the Cataclysm. Much of the land slumbered under the dominion of humankind and their false priests, the Seekers. The Elves were nestled quietly in their forest retreats, the Dwarves sat in their subterranean strongholds and the Gnomes... well, only the Gnomes knew what the Gnomes were up to. With the appearance of the High Dragonlords and their evil dragons all this had been shattered. It seemed as if nothing could halt the inexorable tide of the Dragonarmies as one by one the civilised nations fell under the sway of the forces of Darkness.

There was only one hope for the world of Krynn - a small band of 6-8 pregenerated player characters of levels 4-6 trudging along the road westwards towards the small village of Sollace...

The stage is thus set for an adventure of truly epic proportions: fourteen modules for Advanced Dungeons & Dragons and a trilogy of novels, with a further three books due in the none too distant future. The **Dragonlance** series was conceived in 1982 as a set of three AD&D modules featuring those somewhat maligned and misrepresented monsters, dragons. Apparently the concept found favour with Gary Gygax who was already planning a series of modules with each of the AD&D dragons as a central theme. The 14 packs that finally evolved from this product synopsis take the characters on an episodic quest across the entire continent of Krynn from the quiet rural village of Sollace to the ultimate showdown with Takhisis, Queen of Darkness (who is, incidentally, a five-headed dragon). Along the way there are numerous titanic confrontations for the AD&D Battlesystem and a complete strategic level simulation wargame of the War of the Lance for good measure! It's as if battling your way across a beleagured continent swarming with assorted reptilian and other nasties and blundering into the evil dragons in person (with blood-curdling regularity) wasn't enough to keep you busy.

The first four adventures (*DL1 Dragons of Despair* to *DL4 Dragons of Desolation*) hurl the player characters in at the deep end as they embark upon a fraught journey through Abanasinia just as the Dragonarmies begin their virtually unopposed conquest of the region.

From the village of Sollace the player characters must venture deep into the long buried city of Xak Tsaroth and traverse the forbidden forests of the Qualinesti Elves. They then have to creep into the ancient fortress of Pax Tharkas to release their countrymen who are held by a Dragon Highlord. The PCs then have the dubious honour of escorting their rescued countrymen - who are now refugees - across hostile country. They also have to fend for them just as the first snows of winter fall, As if this wasn't quite enough, there are also some diverting forays into the ruined fortress of Zhaman, and finally an expedition into the vast subterranean realms of Thorbardin, the great Dwarven stronghold. The overall adventure has only just begun. There is hardly an inkling of the sheer scale of the quest that lies ahead - I mean, you've probably only come face to face with a couple of dragons so far!

There's a definite break at the city of Tarsis. Here the party of player characters splits into two smaller groups. One group goes south and west, the other heads east.

For the next three modules the adventure centres on the southern group. This is unfortunate for players who may have got attached to characters who were forced into going eastwards by the storyline. However, it is in the later modules that the scope for personal initiative increases. Time is running out, as the Dark Queen edges nearer the Portal to the Prime Material Plane, imparting a sense of urgency as the days pass by and the quest seems no nearer an end. It is also in these later modules that the players are given the best sight-seeing tours of the continent of Ansalon and provided with some real challenges. The defence of the High Clericists Tower with a handful of squabbling knights against a massed horde of goblins, draconians, mercenaries and blue dragons will test many players, for example. Ultimately there is a great trek across the plains of Neraka, including a short boat trip down rivers of molten lava and into the great Dark Temple itself. The PCs arrive just as the five Dragonarmies with their respective Highlords meet to welcome the Dark Queen to Krynn's plane of existence...

Simply through the sheer volume of material that would confront the prospective gamemaster, getting to grips with the world of Krynn and the Dragonlance adventures is a somewhat daunting task. Although the series represents but a few months in the history of the world of Krynn, the overall playing time is awe-inspiring: *DL5 Dragons of Mystery* suggests 18 sessions of about 4 hours each to complete the first four modules! The story presented in the modules is episodic - each module centering on a particular task to be accomplished or an artifact to be acquired or removed, which helps with the overall number of sessions of play required. Each individual adventure module stands independently of the rest of the series, and opens with a brief synopsis of the story so far, just in case you had forgotten. An epilogue, to be read by the GM, provides the link to the next part of the series.

The connection between the *Dragonlance Chronicles* novels and the Dragonlance modules is, naturally, very pronounced - one gave rise to the other, after all. It would be hard to fully appreciate the modules without the GM, at least, having read the novels and gleaned the atmosphere and background from them. Although the novels and the modules are concerned with the same storyline they are not perfect copies of each other. Players who have read the trilogy may be surprised when confronted by situations or puzzles not encountered by their literary counterparts. There is, in the same sense, no guarantee that the ultimate outcome (the closing of the Portal to thwart Takhisis) can be accomplished in the same manner as described in the novels. The solution will be dictated by the GM and the players must desperately search for clues to the solution of this final and all-important riddle.

In order to fully appreciate the Dragonlance series it is necessary to evaluate your attitudes towards roleplaying in general. Dragonlance is not a series of standard AD&D adventures. Dragonlance is a story - a story with a definite beginning and end,

and with a sequence of requirements that must be met to effect the successful conclusion of the epic. Dragonlance restricts a player's options and freedom of choice so that the overall cohesion of the storyline will persist. Krynn was created primarily as a vehicle for the Dragonlance saga and to this end appears somewhat restrictive when compared with other standard camapign settings. Players are restricted in their freedom of choice and the story will grind on whether a successful conclusion is reached in each module or not.

Players are not recommended to bring their own characters into the epic. They should use the pre-generated characters that correspond to the Heroes of the Lance as presented in the novels. Krynn is not quite a standard AD&D world; for one thing, there are no halflings. Instead there are Kender, a diminutive substitute with a tendency to exhibit symptoms of advanced kleptomania. There are no clerics on Krynn either, since they all vanished hundreds of years ago before the Cataclysm, consequently, *cure light wounds* spells are a bit thin on the ground and you might as well just forget about *resurrection*. Gold is also found in such abundance in this particular world that it is of little value in monetary terms. The common currency is steel and the actual exchange rate varies from one domain to the next. This is a further reason for not using ordinary player characters - with their ill-gotten gains - in the Dragonlance series.

This naturally leads on to one of the major criticisms of the series. Dragonlance does not actively encourage roleplaying in the traditional sense. There is no leeway for the development of characters within the all-pervading plotline, and players will find themselves more or less following a script and unable to influence the overall flow of events in any way. Good roleplaying is not rewarded, nor bad play play punished, experience gained is of little consequence as the pregenerated player characters presented in each module have been updated in each case to allow for a hypothetical successful completion of the preceding module. Of course, they could fail miserably in their quest, but this would hardly be desirable for any GM who intends to run the world as a campaign setting after the War of the Lance.

The GM is positively encouraged to channel the party towards the desired route and should take this into consideration when reading through an adventure prior to play. With the plot assuming such importance it is therefore vital that the characters and the opposing villains survive long enough for them to fulfill their destiny. Hence the introduction of the Obscure Death rule. This exceptional plot device and rules mechanic prevents the PCs from being butchered by draconians (or casually roasted by dragons) in the early stages of the adventure. It also ensures that the baddies escape inevitable and untimely death to honour their last words ('I shall return...') and continue to plague the hapless party until their allotted departure. The Obscure Death rule keeps characters alive and is almost impossible to live with, leading as it does to some potentially ridiculous situations. I know of few players who have managed to get through the first module *DL1 Dragons of Despair*, without at least one fatality, but it is hard to judge whether this was because the module was too tough or whether the storyline at this stage in the epic was too restrictive to avoid overbalanced confrontations. But if you want to play the modules as a reconstruction of the trilogy then the obscure death ruling must be a necessary evil. Handle it with care! It is not suspended for PCs until *DL8 Dragons of War* and is never suspended for the villains until the final showdown in the Temple of the Dark Queen. If you want to play Dragonlance strictly as AD&D then be prepared for casualties - and don't set your hopes on Krynn surviving the onslaught of the Dragonarmies.

It is a shame that the play had to be perverted in such a way. The overall presentation and contents of the modules is of a uniformly high quality. The highly distinctive cover artwork has so far featured on two calendars and probably on Christmas choccy boxes... The large scale campaign maps vary in quality (and, in one case, topographical detail) but are nonetheless functional. The smaller scale adventure maps are drawn in 'three dimensional' perspective cutaway style and there are some absolutely outstanding examples, most notably the High Clericists Tower (all sixteen levels of it). One interesting map sheet, which is included in *DL4 Dragons of Desolation*, is a series of geomorphic sections that can be arranged to form the vast Dwarven realms of Thorbardin. But why is Dwarven architecture always considered to be so dull and repetitive?

The actual module text is generally well written (the list of authors reads like a roster of the TSR, Inc design staff past and present), with the usual boxed descriptions for the GM. The text is also relatively free from glaring errors or typos. All modules are ready to play but do benefit from careful reading and preparation by the GM. Aside from the variations in terrain in the first few maps (the later ones supercede the earlier) one of Dragonlance's main strengths lies in its consistency - the background information is true to itself from beginning to end and not subject to the whim and caprice of individual editors. The sourcebooks for the series, the whole of *DL5 Dragons of Mystery* and a small booklet included in *DL14 Dragons of Triumph* are not exactly overflowing with detail, but they are serviceable enough to act as a springboard to further adventures. We will just have to wait and see how Krynn performs as a campaign setting in the future.

DL11 Dragons of Glory requires some individual attention. As a strategic level wargame, not an adventure module, it is of value to Dragonlance devotees and GMs intending to base future campaigns in the world of Krynn. *Glory* breaks no new ground in the field of simulation wargames, but its simple game mechanics ensure that it is a relatively quick and easy game to play. Featuring the largest scale map of the continent of Ansalon available in the series, it allows players to either reconstruct the War of the Lance according to the novels (as an 'historical' simulation) or to develop their own war strategies. The former is of greater value to roleplayers as the position of armies, and the time and place of battles, may have a crucial effect on the ultimate outcome of individual adventures.

Tracy Hickman, who co-ordinated the project, has always confessed to being first and foremost a storyteller - AD&D adventure modules being an expedient vehicle for the weaving of tales. Dragonlance is ultimately a fantastic story, but maybe not the greatest series of AD&D modules (compare it with the recently re-released *GDQ1-7 Queen of the Spiders*, for instance). That is not to say that Dragonlance is not packed full of epic and memorable adventures. Wait until you venture into Elven realms of Silvanesti, twisted and distorted by the nightmares of its king, Lorac, and populated by shadows and illusions of its former and future self. If fighting giant frog-dragons in the ruined and sunken city of Istar or creeping through the sewers of the sweltering volcanic city of Sanction appeals to you then maybe maybe I'll see you on Krynn sometime...

Gordon Taylor

THRUD THE BARBARIAN
THRUD IS TAKING A SHORT HOLIDAY THIS MONTH – SO INSTEAD HERE'S A STORY OF THE NASTIEST MAN WHO EVER LIVED, OL' BUCKET HEAD HIMSELF –
THE BLACK CURRANT
BRING THE PRISONERS!
SIR!
WELL I SAY IT'S LAURELLA MILLER – SO THWA!
WHAT'S HIS CRIME?
HE'S THE LEADER OF THE REBEL FORCES WHICH HAVE BEEN PLOTTING TO OVERTHROW YOUR TYRANNICAL REGIME MY LORD!
SKIN HIM ALIVE THEN THROW HIM IN A SALT BATH
NO!
NEXT!
STEALING BREAD TO FEED HIS CHILDREN!
CHOP HIS ARMS OFF AT THE ELBOWS AND COVER HIM IN ITCHING POWDER.
NOT PAYING HIS FULL 110% TAX ON HIS BUSINESS EARNINGS!
HANG HIM UPSIDE DOWN WITH HIS HEAD IN A BUCKET OF HUNGRY WORMS!
WEARING A CODPIECE LIKELY TO CAUSE A BREACH OF THE PEACE!
CHOP HIS NOSE OFF, THEN DISEMBOWEL HIM WITH HIS OWN FALSE TEETH!
WHISTLING ON A TUESDAY!
NAIL HIS TOUNGUE TO THE ROOF OF HIS MOUTH – THEN BOIL HIM IN OIL.
YOUR GRANDMA FORGOT YOUR BIRTHDAY AGAIN BOSS!
RIGHT – GET THE MANGLE OUT!
EH! OH NO!
?
I CAN'T LOOK! THAT'S HORRIBLE! HOW DISGUSTING! BELLUGH! I FEEL ILL! I THINK I'M GOING TO BE SICK!
WHAT'S UP?
THAT GUARD'S PICKING HIS NOSE AGAIN!

Illuminations

This month: **Ian Miller**

Remember the cover of *White Dwarf 84*? Seen the covers of the latest Fighting Fantasy books? Flicked through GW's hardback edition of *RuneQuest*? Then you already know something of the amazing work of illustrator Ian Miller.

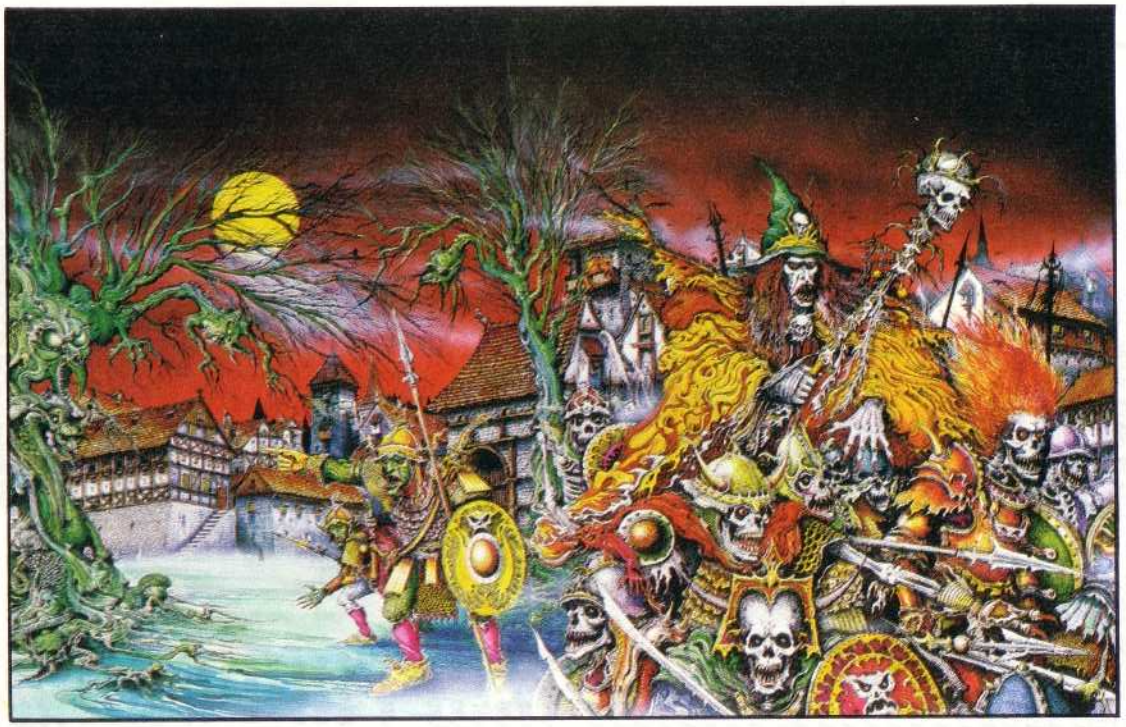
Ian's been around a fair while, though, contributing not only to books and magazines, but also to films such as Ralph Bakshi's *Wizards*.

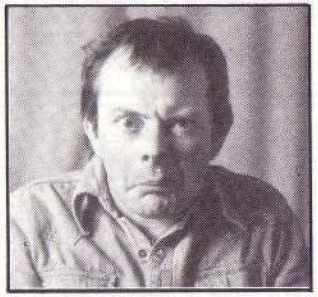
While exploring a variety of techniques and imagery, it is Ian's pen and ink style which has gained him the greatest acclaim. His work, which at first glance resembles an old copper plate etching, sets him apart from the hi-tech mainstream of modern illustration. The realistic gargantuan dreadnoughts and chrome amazons so often featured in the work of his contemporaries are absent. Ian produces images of a nightmare world in a twilight age of horror and fear.

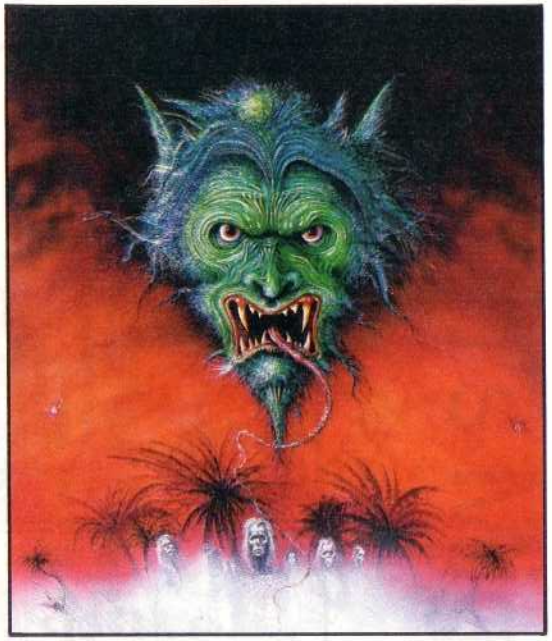
Ian has this to say of his own work 'My images are the stuff of dreams and apparitions; the tremors that touch the skirt of day. Unspoken thoughts, stored memories, drawn up, to be aired, then twisted by fancy.' I might add that Ian's work is nourishing on a psychic level whilst bridging the void between the urban conflict panoply and the pastoral nature spectrum, but I won't. What I will say is that quality speaks for itself.

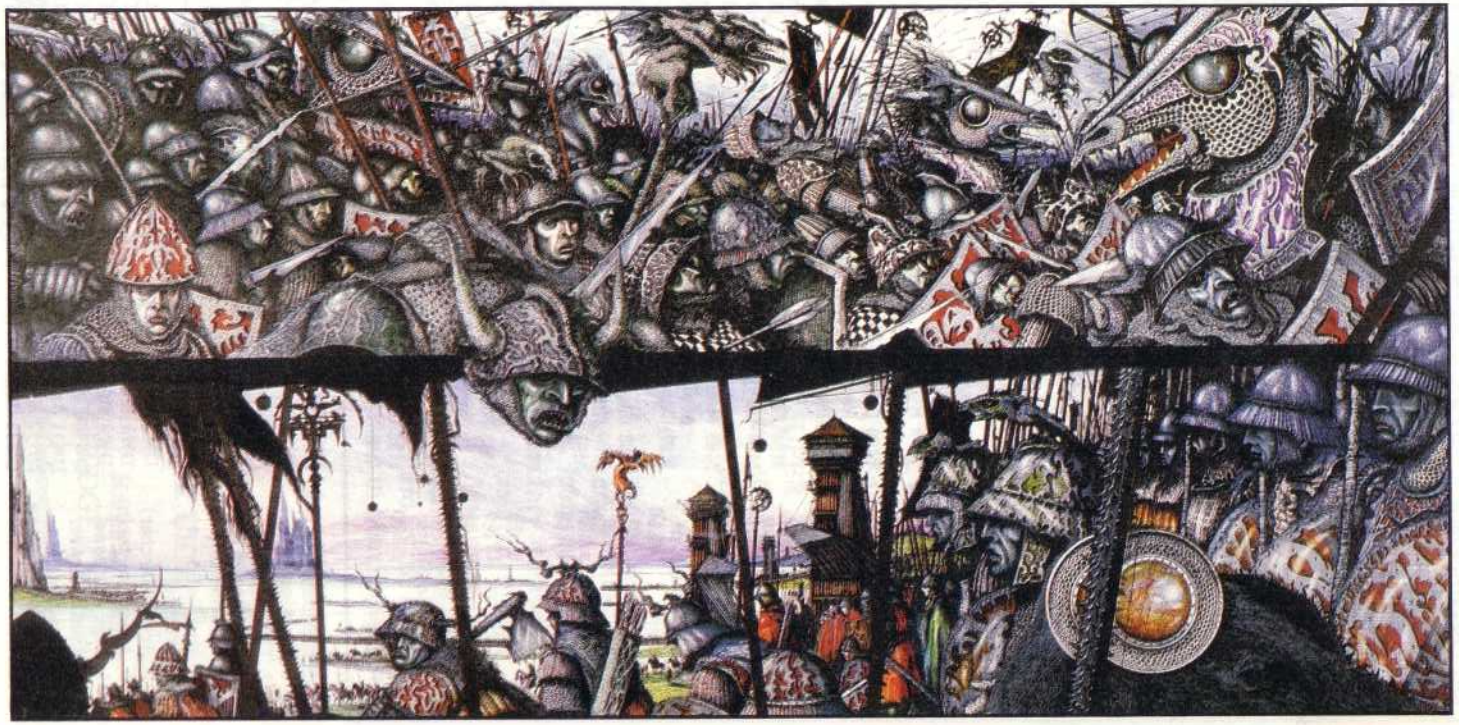
Look out for his work in present and future Games Workshop products, including *RuneQuest, Rogue Trader, White Dwarf* and the re-issued *Terror of the Lichmaster*.

John Blanche









OUT·OF·THE GARDEN

Gnome Player Characters in Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay

by Phil Gallagher

Considering the number of Gnomic communities to be found in the Old World (they are only slightly less numerous than Halflings), the omission of Gnome player characters amounts to a rare oversight in the *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* rules. This article should go some way towards filling that gap.

It is, however, beyond the scope of this article to deal with all the myriad variations of Gnomic society that may be found throughout the Known World. Instead, the information presented here is intended to relate specifically to Gnomes within the north-eastern area of the Old World known as The Empire. Given that the already published campaign sourcepack - *The Enemy Within* - is set in The Empire, it is hoped that this may be of use to GMs running that campaign. Those of you who are running campaigns in other areas should treat the article as a set of guidelines. The Gnomes of Albion, for example, may well have quite different attitudes and beliefs, although these are likely to be superficial rather than radical differences. You should also bear in mind the fact that by far the greatest concentration of Gnomish burrows is to be found in the foothills on the western edges of the Worlds Edge Mountains.

IMPERIAL GNOMES

Within The Empire, Gnomes have a reputation for clannishness, being regarded as a well-balanced race in so far as they obviously have a chip on both shoulders. It is true that they do not easily mix with the other races (adventurers being an exception to this, of course), but they are by no means as secretive and withdrawn as, for example, the Wood-Elves of the Laurelorn Forest. Gnome pedlars are a relatively common sight, and Gnome smiths and engineers are accorded almost as much respect as their Dwarven counterparts - often more, but this is usually from fear of their acerbic wit and sharp-tongued sarcasm. Indeed, it is probably the Gnomic capacity for vitriol which led to the appointment of a Gnome as Imperial Court Jester as long ago as 1143; since then such appointments have become a tradition, and one which the current Emperor - Karl-Franz I - continues to maintain.

Nevertheless, Gnomes prefer to live among other Gnomes in self-contained, isolated communities. These are invariably burrows or cavern networks beneath The Empire's numerous limestone plateaus and other hill ranges. The Gnomish fondness for fishing is almost as infamous as their love of practical jokes, and no permanent settlement is ever established far from a well-stocked fishing lake or river (preferably underground). Indeed, the Gnomic skill with rod and line is almost legendary...

The largest Gnomic community in The Empire (Glimdwarrow) is to be found beneath the hill range known as The Mirror Moors and numbers nearly a thousand inhabitants. Like other Gnomish settlements it is run along complex hierarchical lines, but since each member of the community has several different roles, and a correspondingly different status according to which role they are filling,

Illustration by Euan Smith

Gnomic society invariably strikes outsiders as an incomprehensible confusion. Even their cousins, the Dwarfs, find it difficult to fathom the significance of the innumerable Gnomish customs and rules of etiquette. In each community, there is a clan overlord who acts as a sort of head of state, there is a religious leader who deals with matters spiritual, a craftsmaster who supervises mining and smithing activities, and a loremaster who guards the secrets of the clan's history, preserves its learning, and ensures that ancient customs and rituals are observed with clockwork precision (a sort of metro-gnome). Some clans also have a spellmaster who passes on the Gnomic skills in illusion-weaving to those few Gnomes deemed worthy of such an apprenticeship. Then, of course, the society's warriors are trained in the use of weapons and assigned to the Gnome guard...

THE GNOME CHARACTER PROFILE

If you decide to allow Gnome PCs in your campaign, you should be sure to generate any character *with* the player. Feel free to overrule any dice rolls that produce anomalies with the campaign you are running, and remember that as GM, you may refuse a player entry to any career which you think may unbalance the party. The starter profile of a Gnome PC may be generated according to the following table:

M	D3+2	**A**	1
WS	2D10+30	**Dex**	2D10+20
BS	2D10+10	**Ld**	2D10+30
S	D3+1	**Int**	2D10+20
T	D3	**Cl**	2D10+20
W	D3+4	**WP**	2D10+30
I	2D10+20	**Fel**	2D10+20

THE GNOMIC PHYSIQUE AND CHARACTER

Gnomes in The Empire have often been described - though never to their faces - as small (or 'petty') Dwarfs. They are undoubtedly distant relatives, sharing the same stocky build and long, shaggy beards, but they are about ten inches shorter on average, and are noted for their large, bulbous noses. Gnomes are both more nimble and more dexterous than their larger cousins, and these facts, coupled with their well-known antipathy for other races, has often led to them being labelled 'thieving stunties'. But they also include some highly skilled Illusionists amongst their number, for, unlike Dwarfs, some of them have a great natural aptitude for this kind of magic. Gnomes are also excellent smiths and craftsmen, and are fascinated - not to say obsessed - by all things mechanical; they love gadgets of all kinds. Few Gnomes actually live as part of Human society, but they profit greatly from trade in Gnomish artefacts.

Most Gnomes are great practical jokers; there's nothing they like better than a good laugh at someone else's expense. But woe betide the man or woman who dares to extract the Michael from a Gnome, especially if he or she dares to make any derogatory comments about the Gnome's lack of stature. Not for nothing do they have a reputation for being short-tempered and difficult to get on with.

Being gregarious creatures, who invariably make their homes in communal burrows and caverns, it is unheard of for a Gnome to spend any length of time in the wide open spaces that foster Rangers. Accordingly, there are *no* Gnome Ranger characters, and the careers listed in the *Ranger Basic Career Chart* (**WFRP**, p18) are not normally open to them. Gnome PCs may still follow the careers of *Rat Catcher* and *Prospector*, however, since these are regarded as Warrior Careers.

Speak	Ghassally - a Gnomish dialect of Khazalid (Dwarfish)
Night Vision	30 yards
Alignment	Neutral-Good
Height	Male 3'6" + D8" Female 3'4" + D8"
Psychology	Hatred for Goblins

Age: the age of the character may be determined by rolling 8D10 for 'young' characters, and 8D20 for 'mature' ones. If the result is less than 16, roll again, adding the new score to the old. This gives a potential age range for Gnomes of between 16 and 175 years.

Initial Fate Points: **D3**

SKILLS

The next step is to determine the number of starting skills a character has prior to career selection. Roll 1D4 and modify the result according to the character's age, as shown on the table below. For example, a Gnome character aged 76 would have 1D4+2 initial skills. Note that there are a number of mandatory skills for Gnome characters, listed below.

Age	No. Skills	Age	No.Skills
16-20	-	101-110	+1
21-30	-	111-120	+1
31-40	+1	121-130	-
41-50	+1	131-140	-
51-60	+1	141-150	-
61-70	+2	151-160	-1
71-80	+2	161-170	-1
81-90	+2	171-175	-2
91-100	+1		

All Gnomes have *Smithing*. If the character has two or more initial skills, the second will be one of *Jest*, *Mining*, or *Stone-working*, with an equal chance of each. Any remaining initial skills should be selected at random from the appropriate column of the Chart below. Roll D100 for each and note down the skills as they are generated. If the same skill is rolled twice, ignore the second result and roll again. Consult pages 45-58 of the rulebook for descriptions of each skill.

SKILL CHART

Career Classes			
Warrior	Rogue	Academic	Skill Title
01-05	01-08	01-04	Acute Hearing
06-12	09-12	05-08	Ambidextrous
	13-19	09-16	Blather
	20-27		Bribery
		17-24	Cryptography
13-16	28-31	25-28	Dance
17-24			Disarm
25-31			Dodge Blow
32-38	32-36	29-32	Excellent Vision
39-43	37-40		Fish
41-48	33-39		Flee!
44-50			Fleet Footed
		40-46	Gem Cutting
	49-56	47-53	Haggle
51-54	57-64	54-57	Jest
55-60			Lightning Reflexes
	65-71	58-61	Luck
61-66	72-76	62-65	Night Vision*
		66-72	Orientation
66-69		73-80	Read/Write
69-74	77-84	81-84	Scale Sheer Surface
		85-88	Silent Move Urban
75-80	85-89	89-92	Sing
81-87	90-97		Sixth Sense
		93-00	Super Numerate
88-94	98-00		Very Resilient
95-00			Very Strong

* **Note** that all Gnomes have the innate skill of *Night Vision* to a distance of 30 yards. Characters who gain this skill increase this distance by 50% to 45 yards. GMs may wish to apply this rule to the other demi-human races.

DETERMINING BASIC CAREER

Once the character's career class (Warrior, Rogue, or Academic) has been chosen, you may either select an initial, Basic Career, or roll for one on the appropriate column of the table below. Remember that Gnomes are not eligible for any of the careers not listed here, ie most Ranger careers, any ship-bourne careers, and any careers involving horse-riding (but see Note 1, below).

Career Class			Basic
Warrior	Rogue	Academic	Career
		01-10	Alchemist's Apprentice
		11-20	Artisan's Apprentice
	01-06		Bawd
	07-16		Beggar
01-07			Bodyguard
		21-30	Engineer
	17-27		Entertainer
	28-33		Footpad
	34-42		Gambler
	43-51		Grave Robber
		31-35	Hypnotist
		36-40	Initiate
	52-59		Jailer
	60-68		Jester*(new career - see below)*
08-14			*Labourer*
15-22			*Mercenary* ①
23-29			Militiaman ①
30-34			Noble ① ②
35-42			Outlaw ①
	69-78		Pedlar
		41-49	Pharmacist
		50-54	Physician's Student
43-50			Pit Fighter
51-59			Prospector
60-65			Protagonist ①
	79-85		Raconteur
66-73			Rat Catcher
		55-63	Scribe
		64-70	Seer
74-80			Servant ①
81-88			Smuggler
		71-80	Student ③
	86-94		Thief
	95-00		Tomb Robber
		81-90	Trader
89-96			Tunnel Fighter
97-00			Watchman
		91-00	Wizard's Apprentice

NOTES

① At the GM's option, *Ride* skill may either be disallowed or deemed to apply only to ponies/mules.

② This career applies only to Gnomish society. There are no Gnome nobles at the Imperial Court!

③ The Student career may either mean that the character has received some formal education in a Human university, or that he or she has served some time as an apprentice to a Gnomic loremaster (the Gnomic equivalent of the Advanced Career of Scholar).

NEW GNOMIC CAREER JESTER

Jesters have been employed by most noble families in The Empire since time immemorial. In a political system where intrigue and double-dealing is the quickest way to the top, the 'fool' serves the dual function of relieving the pressures of command by presenting his/her employer in a comic light, and of being a trustworthy confidante - someone without political ambitions of their own. With their penchant for biting put-downs and off-the-cuff wit, added to their complete disinterest in the politics of The Empire, Gnomes are ideally suited to this role. It is true that they rarely remain in the job for long - sooner or later they either get fed up of being isolated from their own kind, or get carried away and have to be dismissed for insulting some visiting dignitary. Nevertheless, those Imperial nobles unable to find a Gnomish jester have often been heard to bemoan the fact that they 'don't have a Gnome to go to...'

Advance Scheme

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
	+10	+10			+1	+10

A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
+20		+10				+20

Only Gnomes may have an initial career of Jester; others may become Jesters after completing the career of **Entertainer - Troubador**.

Skills
Acrobatics
Clown
Dance
Jest
Juggle
50% chance of Mimic
25% chance of Palm Object
25% chance of Wit
10% chance of Contortionist
10% chance of Ventriloquism

Trappings
Jester's stick
Quartered clothing
6 wooden balls
Rope - 10 yards

Career Entries
Basic
Entertainer (Troubador)
Minstrel

Career Exits
Basic
Entertainer (any)
Minstrel
Raconteur

Advanced
Charlatan
Spy

RINGIL - Gnome God of Smiths and Jesters

Description: Ringil is the chief deity of the Gnomic pantheon. He is the protector of the communal burrow, and the embodiment of the Gnomish skills of smithing and jesting. He is usually depicted as an elderly male Gnome with an impish grin, his right hand wielding a hammer, and the left clutching either a bladder on a stick or a fishing rod.

Alignment: Neutral

Symbol: Ringil is usually represented by a stylised version of a jester's head on a stick.

Area of Worship: Ringil is worshipped by Gnomes throughout the Old World, and has also been adopted by some Dwarfs as Rukh, God of Smiths.

Temples: All Gnome burrows have a temple to Ringil; in most cases this takes the form of a huge cavern, preferably a natural one, illuminated only by *Glowing Light* spells. The temple is also used for large, clan meetings.

Friends and Enemies: The Cult of Ringil maintains friendly relations with the Dwarven pantheon, and has cordial, if infrequent contact with that of the Halfling deity, Esmeralda. It has very little to do with the gods of Elves and Humans and is openly hostile towards the enemies of the Gnome and Dwarven races.

Holy Days: Lesser festivals to Ringil are held on the first day of each month, and major festivals, usually known as 'Fools' Days' take place every three months.

Cult Requirements: Any adult Gnome may become a follower of Ringil.

Strictures: All Initiates and Clerics of Ringil must abide by the following strictures:

- Never tolerate any insulting behaviour towards any Gnome;
- 10% of all income must be made over to the Cult;
- The products of a Gnome smith are sacred and must not be abused;
- No informing on a brother or sister Gnome.

Spell Use: Clerics of Ringil may use all *Petty Magic* and *Illusion* spells.

Skills: In addition to the skills normally available to Clerics, followers of Ringil must spend the necessary experience points to acquire *one* of the following at each level: *Evaluate, Haggle, Set Trap*, and *Spot Traps*.

Trials: A trial set by Ringil usually involves a daring and/or dangerous practical joke, or possibly the manufacture of a special item, the cost of which will be proportional to the severity of the crime for which the trial has been set.

Blessings: Skills favoured by Ringil are *Stoneworking, Engineer, Jest, Smithing*. Favoured tests are *Bluff, Construct, Estimate*, and *Pick Pocket*.

Welcome Sports Fans

Skaven in Blood Bowl - by Coach Jervis Johnson

"Good evening, sports fans, and welcome to the Blood Bowl for tonight's thrilling contest. This evening we're being joined by the 50,000 or so readers of, um, White Dwarf magazine, so I'd like to say a big hello to you all from the capacity crowd here in the New World. It seems that our crazy little game has become quite popular over there on planet Earth, and that the fans are just dying to know more about the rules and teams that play it, isn't that right, Jim?"

"It sure is, Bob! Well, folks, tonight's big game features one of the wackiest teams of all, and we're sure they are going to give the Dwarf Giants a tough contest, so as the teams come out onto the field let's give a great big hand to the **Skaaaven Scramblers!!** *"*

THE SKAVEN AND CLAN RIGENS

Skaven are the horribly mutated offspring of giant rats which have fed on Warpstone, the raw Chaos material that was sucked into the Known World when the gateways of the Old Slann become unstable thousands of years ago. Very quickly, within a space of only a few generations, the Warpstone changed them. They became more intelligent, their bodies became more humanoid, their minds sharpened. They found organisation, and religion, and terrible magic. Now their festering communities lurk beneath the streets of hosts of major cities across the Known World, plotting, planning... and exploring.

And then they discovered Blood Bowl. Skaven societv is a stratified one, bound up in complex rituals, but out there on the Blood Bowl pitch all barriers seemed to drop away as player assailed player to give his team complete and utter victory over the other. The game became very popular in all fields of Skaven society, for in truth they love *any* opportunity for mindless violence. True to their warped nature, though, they adapted it to their own special ways, forming a new Clan to govern and control it - the Clan Rigens. The Clan Rigens consists of over 20 Blood Bowl teams, and if they can't find any non-Skaven opponents they are more than happy to battle games out amongst themselves. We shall concentrate out attentions on probably the most famous Clan Rigens team, the Skaven Scramblers, which includes popular players like Breeet Braingulper and Skrag The Unclean.

SKAVEN IN *BLOOD BOWL*

Skaven Blood Bowl teams receive 4 Star Player points, but instead of rolling on the normal Star Player Table you should use the special Skaven Star Player Table below. Skaven may never choose to have Defensive or Kicking players.

Skaven

MA	CS	TS	ST
5	3	3	3
TH	**WD**	**AT**	**CL**
3	1	1	5

Thanks to their association with Warpstone, Skaven are often tainted with the mark of Chaos - strange mutations which show the approval of the gods of Chaos (long suspected of being great Blood Bowl fans!). In addition the Clans use Warpstone to manufacture strange magical devices to help their play, and the Clan Rigens is no exception. To take this into account Skaven teams should use the special Skaven Star Player Table:

Skaven Star Player Table

Score	*Ability*
2	Warpstone Armour, see below
3	Very Skilful, +2 to Combat Skill
4	Warpstone Charm, see below
5	Skilful, +1 to Combat Skill
6	Fast, +1 to Movement
7	Mutation, see below
8	Fast, +1 to Movement
9	Accurate, +1 to Throwing Skill
10	Strong, +1 to Strength
11	Cool, +1 to Cool
12	Very Cool, +2 to Cool

Warpstone Armour: Warpstone Armour is made with very special spikey bits - they have been impregnated with a form of Warpstone that acts as a deadly poison to non-Skaven creatures. Any creature that would normally have to roll on the Wound Table following an Attack or Tackle by a Skaven wearing Warpstone Armour is considered to be dead - a slow, painful death brought about by the effects of the Warpstone! In addition, Skaven with Warpstone Armour are assumed to be Defensive players, and all the rules that normally apply to Defensive players apply to them. *Note:* This is the only way Skaven can have a Defensive player in their team.

Warpstone Charm: Warpstone Charms are made from pieces of Warpstone. However, they aren't worn on dinky little chains around their necks, or sewn into brooches to pin cloaks up - these pieces are literally hammered into the Skaven's skin, often about the head, so they stick out like a row of studs. A Skaven with a Warpstone Charm is allowed to use it *once* per game. This enables him to re-roll any one die throw, whether it's a throw to hit, a saving throw or whatever.

Mutations: Any Skaven with a Mutation should roll once on the following table:

Roll	*Mutation*	*Effect*
2	—	Roll twice, ignoring rolls of 2 or 12, or choose any one mutation.
3	Two Heads	Gives +1 to all attempts to catch the football.
4	Three Legs	This Skaven is allowed to kick the football (and all the normal rules for kicking apply). If the Skaven's Cool is less than 7, modify it to 7. The Skaven's Toughness is reduced by -1, as for kicking players.
5	Noisome Stench	All opponents in adjacent squares (ie, the Skaven's DZ) suffer a -1 modifier to all Attack 'to hit' rolls and Tackle rolls - no matter who they are attacking or tackling. Skaven are completly unaffected by the awful smell this creature gives off!
6	Tail	The Skaven has a prehensile tail which it can use to help trip up opponents, and which gives a +1 bonus to all Tackle die rolls.
7	Scaly	Scales completly cover the Skaven, conferring a +1 Saving Throw.
8	Leprous Flesh	Skin & flesh hang from the Skaven in sickening leprous folds. Any opponent is so disgusted that they suffer a -1 modifier to any Attack 'to hit' rolls and Tackle die rolls made on this creature.
9	Obese	The Skaven is extremly fat. Its Movement is reduced by -2, but all its Tackle die rolls are modified by +1, and its Toughness is increased by +1.
10	Carapace	Horny plates protect the creature's body. All its Saving Throws are increased by +2 but its Movement is modified by -1.
11	4 Arms	All catching die rolls are modified by +2, and the Skaven gets two Attacks per turn instead of the normal one (it can still only make one Tackle per turn).
12	—	Roll twice, ignoring rolls of 2 or 12, or choose any one mutation.

CAMPAIGN RULES

All the normal rules for campaign games apply to Skaven teams, except that they roll on the Skaven Star Player Table rather than the standard table when they trade in their 10 experience points.

SKAVEN TEAM COUNTERS

In the centre of this magazine you'll (hopefully!) find a really super little piece of cardboard, on which is printed - in full colour, no less - a complete set of Skaven counters for use with your Blood Bowl game. (*Please note:* Those members of the White Dwarf readership who do not yet possess a copy of *Blood Bowl* have obviously got a death wish. We strongly suggest that they rush out to their nearest games shop and obtain a copy at the earliest opportunity - before we send one of the Dwarf Giants around to demonstrate the game to them!)

To use these counters with your game you'll need to remove the insert from the magazine and then carefully cut them out (you may need a pair of scissors to help you with this part). If you look really hard you'll notice that four of the counters

are different from all the others. That's because these represent the four Star Players of the Skaven Scramblers. For those of you who would like to play with or against this team the characteristics and abilities of these players are as follows:

Breeet Braingulper

So named for the particularly disgusting way he demonstrates any objection he may have to a referee's decision (the referee in question never gets the opportunity to make the same mistake twice). Braingulper is the Scrambler's best football-chucker.

MA	CS	TS	ST
5	3	5	3
TH	**WD**	**AT**	**CL**
3	1	1	6

Magic Item: Warpstone Charm.

Skrag the Unclean

Skrag has been blessed by the Chaos Gods with a horrible personal problem and smells so badly that most creatures (apart from Skaven, who can't even understand what all the fuss is about) are instantly revolted.

MA	CS	TS	ST
5	3	3	3
TH	**WD**	**AT**	**CL**
3	1	1	5

Mutation: Noisome Stench. Skrag's stench is so bad it affects all creatures within 2 squares, instead of the normal one.
Magic Item: Warpstone Charm.

Shisk Four-Arms

Experts are now comparing Shisk with the legendary Tarsh Surehands, which is high praise indeed. The combination of Shisk and Breeet Braingulper has proved a winning combination for the Scramblers in game after game this season.

MA	CS	TS	ST
5	3	3	3
TH	**WD**	**AT**	**CL**
3	1	1	7

Mutation: Four Arms

Glart Smashrip

Smashrip is so obese he is almost spherical, with huge folds of fat that flop about as he trys to move. He has an impresive record of opponents killed during matchs, standing at 56 at last count. This figure obviously doesn't include those who have been crushed to death by Smashrip's famous flying tackle!

MA	CS	TS	ST
2	3	3	4
TH	**WD**	**AT**	**CL**
4	1	1	5

Mutation: Obese
Magic Item: Warpstone Armour

Please note: The Skaven Scramblers are one **mean** *team, and should only be matched up against teams with at least 6 Star Player Points.*

Did you know?...

...that the most famous Skaven Player of all was called Tarsh Surehands. Tarsh had two heads and four arms, features which made him the leading pass receiver in the league. Sadly, in a crucial wild card game against the SSSchHtt V'gghUYth snakemen team, a missed pass led to his two heads having a violent argument, and before anyone could stop him he had strangled himself to death!

OOPS!

'Well, Jim, looks like someone out there made a Fumble in the closing moments of the game!'

'That's right, Bob. However, the offending rules have been sent off, and are just about to be substituted by the following...'

Yes, the unthinkable has happened. Commie traitors from another... Whoops - wrong game! Erm, anyway, whoever is responsible, there are a couple of slight mistakes in the first few copies of *Blood Bowl*. As you may have already discovered, the Kicking Table has columns for Strengths from 4 to 10. This should in fact read from 3 to 9 (in other words, where it says 4 it should say 3, where it says it should say 4, and so on, all the way up to what used to be 10 and should now be 9).
Any prone or standing player may hand-off the football to another **standing** player in an adjacent square. He may not hand-off to a *prone* player. Guess which word we accidentally omitted?

And finally, a prone player may **not** attempt to catch the football if it is thrown, or scatters, into their square. All they can do, in fact, is lie there and whimper softly to themselves, until they are able to stand up again.

Incidentally, some Blood Bowl fans have noticed that you only get 6 Halfling counters with the game, which is not enough for a full team. We realise that some of you might identify with the small, repulsive little creatures, but felt that no-one would want to play a Halfling team (because they are *so* naff). The counters we did deign to include are actually there so the revolting little reptiles can take their rightful places in the Heroes of Law special team (though why anyone would...). If you're really lucky there might be a full Halfling team in the first Expansion Set. Then again, there might not be.

BUCKETS OF BLOOD BOWL!!

"And now, folks, it's Competition Time. We've got all sorts of Blood Bowl goodies to give away, and it's real easy. All you have to do is look at this replay of this classic clash between the Darkside Cowboys and the Dwarf Giants, and tell us who you think the spare head belongs to!"

"I hate to stop you, Bob, but we did that one last week. This week, all we want you to do is make up a name for a new Blood Bowl team. All entries received by March 6th 1987 will be put in a helmet and drawn out, and we'll award the most amusing entries one of these fabulous prizes:

First Prize: The Blood Bowl Trophy, a specially mounted Blood Bowl player painted by the infamous (well, inhuman at any rate) Colin Dixon of *'Eavy Metal* fame **plus** a signed copy of Blood Bowl **plus** all three Blood Bowl badges.

5 Second Prizes: Signed copies of Blood Bowl **plus** all three Blood Bowl badges.

20 Runner-up Prizes: All three superb Blood Bowl badges.

"OK fans, nothing to it, eh? Send your entries, with your name and address, to the following address:

Blood Bowl Competition
c/o White Dwarf
Enfield Chambers
14-16 Low Pavement
Nottingham NG1 7DL

"Incidentally, sports fans, if you can't wait to see if you've won anything in the competition, you can order the Officially Franchised Nuffle Armorical Football (that's Blood Bowl to you!) badges for only 50p each, plus 25p postage, any quantity. Badges for the following teams are currently available: the **Evil Gits**, *the* **Chaos All-Stars** *and the* **Champions of Death**. *Address all orders to Games Workshop Mail Order, Chewton St, Hill Top, Eastwood, Notts NG16 3HY. See you same time next week, folks, for another exciting round of BLOOD BOWL!"*

There is a wide gulf in roleplaying games today: between fantasy games and science fiction games — or more generally, those which use magic and those which use technology. A few games have attempted to bridge the gap, some successfully, some not. Whilst this gulf is possibly a good thing, bringing technology into fantasy games does add yet another dimension, another huge area for GMs to explore.

The reverse, bringing magic into technological games, is probably not as good a bet. Such games require a normal, ordered scientific world where objects fall to the ground if dropped, no-one can fly and so on. Magic would disrupt this background and players would be less able to relate to it. Superhero games are the exception, but as they rely on personal abilities of characters rather than a complete magic system they can be left alone.

It is the introduction of technology into a magic-based system that is interesting. Here there is already an 'illogical' unreal world in which technology would only be another aspect. The first important point is to relate the level of technology to the general level of civilisation. To the primitive people of, say, a tribal *D&D* land, mirrors or copper wires would be miracles. To an advanced kingdom, or cultivated empire, the level and sophistication of technology can be boosted. The guideline is that technology must appear as magical to the people if affects. As Arthur C Clarke once said, 'any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic'.

In general, I would always set a 'lower limit' anyway. I think most people would agree that bringing cars, steam engines, chain-saws, etc into a fantasy campaign would rather spoil the effect. This low-tech, industrial technology should be avoided, unless it particularly suits the setting. It is the advanced 'sci-fi' technologies that are interesting — partly because at such levels more unusual things can happen, and partly because the players will not have the same level of compre-hension as the GM who designed it in the first place. This latter idea has a further point: that it is wiser to tell the players that technology exists and they can utilise it than to keep them in the dark. There is little point in bringing in such an important aspect and not letting the players use it. Of course using it and fully comprehending it are two different things.

The lower technological limit I would set would be that of the last quarter of this century — computers (microminiature items especially) and the like. I have brought into my own D&D campaign a very advanced technology — perhaps at the Ixian level of the *Dune* books. It is virtually indistinguishable from magic — even though my players know full well what it is. Once players have realised they cannot treat such technological marvels as they would in real life, they will unconsciously think of them as magical, and interact with them similarly.

There is virtually no upper limit to be set! Again from my own experience, I have decided that there is a level of technology that is indistinguishable from life itself — 'ultratechnology'. Here I allow virtually effortless spacetravel, perfect unimaginably

vast computers, and so on. I also allow avatars of machines, real living beings with characteristics according to their technological origin. Ultratech items can be conceived of as living beings able to reproduce themselves, exhibit complex emotions, die and so on. Such beings (or machines, depending upon personal preference) make excellent 'mysterious' non-player characters from the point of view of motives and types.

But where do all these things come from? There are a few possibilities, depending upon how free a campaign is, and how easily it takes new concepts. One idea might be the classic 'lost civilisation'. Here, you set your campaign many many years after the previous civilisation collapsed (global wars, biological plagues, etc are typical causes) leaving all their artefects behind to be discovered by the players. Of course, the technology would have to be advanced since the machines must be able to look after themselves over the inervening centuries (or whatever). For example, there could be heuristic (self-improving) programs, cybernetics (systems that exhibit human characteristics), von Neumann machines (those that reproduce themselves) and so on. Power sources would probably be solar, geothermal, or other long-term types.

Alternatively, you could use a temporal basis for technology: that future advanced eras come back into their own past for whatever reason. Historical research, pre-manipulation of their own time eras, experimentation on 'primitive' stock, etc are all possible reasons.

A more radical idea is to expand your campaign from a single land, or perhaps planet, into the galaxy — or even the entire universe! Having taken this step (and it is not really so difficult) you have entire alien technologies to utilise. This is what I have done in my own setting. The limit so far is the galaxy, but who knows, even that might change... Having decided to invent alien technologies, the usual problem is interfacing them, if more than one exists in the setting. I avoid this by assuming they're so advanced, the computer control systems should eventually be able to talk to each other... a cop-out, but who cares? It is the ideas that matter. Since we are treating these advanced machines as magic, there is simply no need to explain exactly how they work. I use machine/organic interfaces, which are probably beyond everything except our inven-ted 'ultratech', but don't bother to explain exactly how the feat was done. It isn't necessary. It also brings in such fascinating things as cyborgs (excellent NPCs), special bio-computers that can talk directly to living beings, and lots of other possibilities.

You may think that introducing technology into fantasy campaigns would demean magic. Perhaps, but I have not noticed myself. My players have simply made room for it in their actions, using magic pretty much as they used to. It does depend on how you set the thing up — flooding a city with amazing machines will inevitably unbalance the setting. More subtle introduction is the way, and particularly if you give the actual machines very specific effects, then they won't affect the magic side unduly.

The place to get inspiration is of course sf books, an invaluable source. I could mention many but the ones below show the variety possible. Frank Herbert's *Dune* sequence is a good place to find ideas. The Ixian technologists came up with many good

IT'S A KIND O

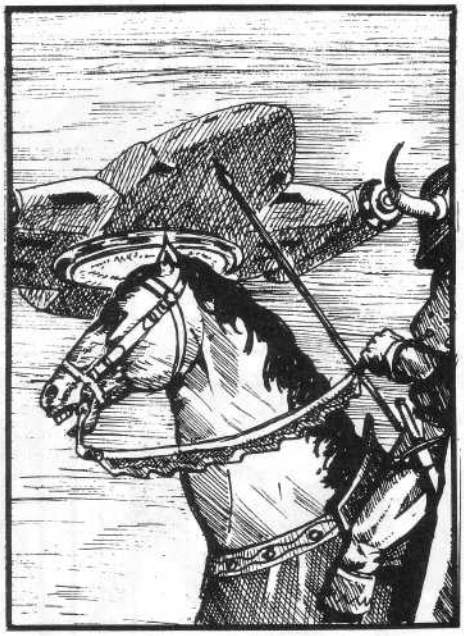
things, in particular the 'no-rooms', non-spaces where characters could hide from prescient viewing. This could be expanded by allowing no-rooms to shield people from anything — psionics, magical detection, detection by other machines, and so on. Linking all conceivable no-spaces together could provide a spacewarp-type method of instantaneous travel. They also developed hugh no-rooms called no-ships. Another feature of the *Dune* books are the various special information storage devices — Ridulan crystal, for example. Such very compact memories are a useful idea — the diamond-memory of the film *Zardoz* (and also Gene Wolfe's *Book of the New Sun*) is another example. Lost diamonds have always been an interesting area of our own history and can provide good adventure ideas. The Dune cloning techniques were also very advanced although provided by another group, the Tleilaxu. Clones are another useful source of scenario ideas — no character wants duplicates of himself wandering about unchecked, be they good or evil.

Newcomer William Gibson has invented a fascinating extrapolation of today's computer technology (in *Neuromancer, Count Zero* and *Burning Chrome* — required reading!), cyberspace. This is the hallucinatory 'terrain' of the World Data Network as perceived by the human brain. The possibilities of cyberspace are endless and absorbing. Gibson also uses bio/machine interfaces which seem very advanced — chips that can be 'plugged in' to sockets built into humans, for example. In a similar vein, though with the accent on biology, Greg Bear's *Blood Music* is well worth looking into.

Julian May's *Plicocene* quartet also have some nice 'magical' technological ideas, especially the various fields that allow time travel (of a sort), inertialess flight, genetic manipulations, and other goodies. I particularly like Marc Remilard's Cerebro-enhancer, a device enabling him to vastly amplify and modify his mental abilities. This sort of character as an NPC is truly fascinating, the archetypal man-machine beloved of many stories. A pity about May's attempted scientific explanations and plot devices, though — still, you can't have everything.

The Book of the New Sun is an unusually inspirational source. Though GMs should never steal ideas wholesale (modification to suit the GM or the campaign is always better) these four volumes are packed with irresistable things. There is a large range of items based on mirrors — books with mirror-leaves, octagonal space-bending mirror-chambers, and perfect mirrored armour. Even more fascinating are the butterfly-like beings that inhabit the former two artefacts.

Then there are the strange spaceships that affect gravity in their local area, then disappear into inconceivable spaces. There are 'aquastors', beings supported in reality, usually by machines that search the minds and memories of others to create them. This idea of mental ability or effects in conjunction with highly advanced technologies is a particularly rewarding one, going back to the 'man-machine' again. The House



Absolute, residence of the Autarch, is another interesting concept — two houses designed so that the secret second one co-exists with the first, and yet is almost unfindable.

The Book of the New Sun illustrates another important point in merging technology with magic: weaponry. Experience (and common sense) has shown that extraterrestrial or highly advanced weapons, energy weapons in particular, are far more deadly than magical ones. Gene Wolfe's star-pistols, energy-lances and suchlike are inevitably superior to magical weapons or missiles, by their very nature. Hence PCs should never be allowed to get their hands on such items as they will wreck your adventures, however carefully you planned it. Similarly, GMs should hold back on advanced weaponry or use it with great caution and under controlled circumstances. Cyborgs with laser-arms might be great NPCs, but not if they slice up the party in two seconds.

For the 'classic' techno-fantasy there is Jack Vance's rich and complex human-alien settings — the *Dying Earth* series in particular. These are much more magic/fantasy orientated, but the interfaces between magic and technology are still there and well worth checking out. A large dictionary is useful when reading Vance's books.

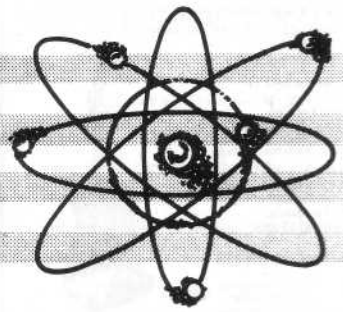
Another useful source of ideas is non-fiction books — even *New Scientist*, *Nature* and *Scientific American*! There are plenty of well written books available.

Now, having postulated the existance of these wonderful technological devices, who uses them — and how did they learn? There are various answers. If the machines are of alien origin, clearly the aliens are the best users. Incidentally, as you might expect, aliens make superb NPCs if handled properly — ie not as crazed xenophobic homicidal laser-wielding hulks. The best kind of alien is nonviolent, perhaps in the manner of *Star Trek's* Vulcans; either that or small and furry, like Felix from *The Travellers*.

If the users are the ones who designed the technology, there is no problem. It is if and when the machines and devices are found by your average party of adventurers that thought is needed. One way would be to let them experiment until they understand the basic principles (another reason for disallowing weapons — things can get messy). This is probably the best method, since a lot of player-GM interaction will result. An alternative might be to allow teaching units which automatically invite the players to plug in and learn. In my own campaign, some of the more advanced computer systems are like artificial intelligences, and can make decisions themselves as to their users. One or two can re-form themselves into teaching units, or in fact any other dedicated system. Once used, they restructure themselves into the original system, or whatever the player (or NPC) desires.

As a final point, GMs should never hold back on altering player/characters' items or discoveries to change the plot slightly, or alter their status. Things do go occasionally wrong with machines! If you use Artificial Intelligences, or self-aware technologies, they will of course be able to work with or against the users, as any other normal non-player character would. The important thing is to let things run smoothly and keep them balanced. I would beware letting technology become the dominant aspect of a fantasy scenario, unless the GM genuinely wants to change it in this fashion. It is best treated as only another aspect of the game.

OF MAGIC



HEAVY METAL

Fig 1

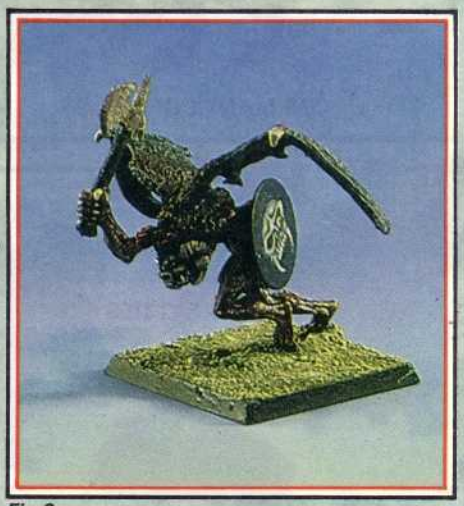


Fig 2

Fig 3

Fig 4

Fig 5

Fig 6

Fig 7

Fig 8

Fig 9

Fig 10

Fig 11

Fig 12

Fig 1: converted Battledroid
Fig 2: converted Great Fire Demon
Fig 3: Goblin Standard Bearer
Fig 4: War of the Roses Cavalry:
Fig 5: Daves adaption of the **Judge SJS Judges** to his own sci-fi
Fig 6: Angman Chaos Taker shows his defiance, this diorama features the sadly missed Citadel giant head and one of the dwarfs from The Dwarf Lords of Legend Boxed Set
Figs 7,8 & 9: Chaos Abounds. **C35** Warriors ready to find blood for the Blood God
Fig 10: splendid Old Chaos Broo
Fig 11: **C26** Men at Arms with a Paper Banner added
Fig 12: Zoat - new Limited Edition Model
*Fig 13:*Fimir - new Limited Edition

Fig 13

Illustrations by Brett Ewins

DOGS OF WAR

Mercenaries in roleplaying games
Chris Felton

"'Tis a great day, General," the young King piped. "Today we shall hang the usurper from the nearest yew."

"Aye, sire, we shall." replied the General.

"Ye seem to doubt your own words, my Lord," noted the King.

"His army was blooded in the frontier battle, while ours is untried. And now he has the Wolf Pack..."

"Six hundred mercenaries will make little difference to his ten thousand men. And we have over eight thousand mercenaries in our twenty thousand."

"He has four thousand mercenaries who signed on singly - good men. His other troops are all volunteers, and having the Wolf Pack on your side is worth a thousand men in morale alone - they are the best. Ours are the dregs: scum like Jevice's Horde and the Black Dragons, a load of swaggering bravoes, backed up by town guardsmen and conscripts."

"General, even if we do win today, we should have your head for such talk. But we shall be merciful, for we shall win - the Gods are on our side."

"I'd feel happier if the Wolf Pack knew that" muttered the General as the King strode away.

Despite their importance in wars and politics (the usual focus of roleplaying games), few RPGs cover mercenaries: the *AD&D Dungeon Masters Guide* includes them in the 'Expert Hirelings' section, separating them into 16 categories whose pay varies between £40 and £120 per month (calculated by the Ale Standard), including food and housing, while their officers earn up to £192,000 a year! The RuneQuest II rules, for example, list the favoured weaponry, armour and spells of five types, since characters may be ex-mercenaries, but they give no guidelines on the cost of hiring mercenaries or how they can be used. Other games ignore them totally. This article is intended to correct this by giving a view of mercenary life, along with the facts and figures needed to use them in games.

All rates of pay listed in this article have been worked out in accordance with the Ale Standard (explained in Paul Vernon's articles in *WD29-33* and *Best of WD III*), and are listed in AD&D gold pieces. For conversion purposes, 1 AD&D GP = £20 now = 2 RQ Lunars = Cr40 Traveller = $15 Daredevils... Obviously, modern and SF mercenaries will use different weapons and tactics, but these can be converted too: for elite light cavalry read light grav tanks (Tech 13), for horse archers read civilian cars with Lewis gun mounts...

What Are Mercenaries?

Mercenaries are soliders who fight for forces other than their national army. Most fight for anyone who will pay their price, some for a principle they believe in. Most travel around the wars, many work for the same army in garrison or troop training work for years. There is no such thing as a typical mercenary. Few people, for example, realise that the British Army still employs mercenaries: they're called the Gurkhas!

Some mercenaries are experienced, professional troops trying to better their lot, but they are usually outnumbered by the bravoes who are in the job because it offers them the opportunity to swagger and look tough in front of the civilians when they're out of work, and when they're in work they can rape, pillage, and plunder. The latter are despised by the former as they give mercenaries their bad reputation, and the bravoes fear the good mercenaries as they do have enough service to recognise the hard self-assurance which *really* tough men have - an experienced mercenary has real charisma, and can often control a crowd of rowdy young toughs with a few hard words.

A good mercenary has been in action several times, usually over at least five years, and has become a good soldier. He owns his own equipment (experienced mercenaries will never be light foot troops since they always have reasonable armour in games where armour is used), and 75% of mercenary cavalry will have they own warhorses (but high-tech vehicular troops rarely have their own vehicles unless they're hired as a unit). As experienced troops, they have learned the value of self-discipline and the need to follow orders but they don't like the restrictions placed on them by an oath of fealty to a big Army, so they prefer to travel. This makes them comparatively knowledgeable, often speaking several languages and well-versed in the customs and geography of many lands, even those they've never been to (it's nice to know such things, just in case). This doesn't exclude self-disciplined and efficient mercenaries from a Chaotic alignment in AD&D - they don't necessarily disobey orders their motto is 'The only worthwhile discipline is self-discipline'.

A poor mercenary has usually been in the profession less than five years (after which he's either dead or he's become a good mercenary), and is the son (the few female mercenaries are all in it for reasons of their own, so they rarely fall into the macho image-building of the bravoes) of a large, middle-class family. Lower-class families cannot buy their sons the sort of training which will qualify them for mercenary units. Upper-class sons wouldn't demean themselves with the hard life of professional soldier unless the family is broken, dishonoured, or whatever, in which case he will be striving for reputation, classing him with the professionals. Their equipment is rarely well-maintained, and they rarely train unless an officer is standing nearby to ensure that they do. Most of their time is spent gambling, drinking, wenching and, naturally, swaggering. In battle, they tend to die a lot.

What Do They Do?

A mercenary is supposed to kill people, right? Wrong - after establishing their reputation many good ones never draw steel in anger again. When they decide that the time for them to ride around seeking out wars is over, most mercenaries settle down to marry and sign a long-term contract to train regular troops, city guardsmen or militiamen. Few are still riding around in battle after the age of 30: by that time they've survived 12-16 years of war and can command good money as an instructor. Only veterans of over five years' experience can normally gain training contracts - no-one wants a bravo in charge of their delicate young recruits.

Apart from long-term contracts, mercenary work is seasonal. Wars (until the 19th-century advent of total war) were always fought in early summer, between planting and harvest. Mercenaries don't worry about agriculture, but if war is mounted in planting or harvesting time the crops will not be tended and conqueror and conquered alike starve. In late summer and autumn the mercenaries move onto garrison duties to replace those released to tend the crops (troops in rural regions are usually made up of such part-timers), and in winter they are unemployed unless they manage to gain a temporary instructorship, training the troops kept in barracks by the bad weather. This assumes a European style climate, of course, adjust it if your campaign is set in Egypt or the Congo! Garrison work is always available in late summer and

autumn, but wars are difficult to reach in time and there are few winter instructorships available.

Since this means that mercenaries may be out of work for up to eight months of the year (and because they're being paid to risk their lives) mercenaries are expensive, and they demand fixed-term contracts, which means that if they sign on for a four-month war and win it within a month they can sit around for the next three months' pay (or collect cash in lieu and sign up for another war somewhere else). Normally, though, fixed-term contracts are usually timed to end with the campaign, so a four-month contract may well specify that the troops will train together for three months to get used to working as a unit and improve their efficiency in the field before starting out for a war they think they can win within three weeks (but they allow 30% overtime in case it's tougher than they thought). Training usually starts at the beginning of April, most invasions occur in mid-June, and peace treaties are signed by the end of July.

It is this training period which determines a mercenary's place in the army. They usually sign on singly or in small groups, and the officers must weld these mobs into and efficient army within a couple of months. Slackers will be spotted and either weeded out (rarely - an army usually needs all the cannon-fodder it can get) or consolidated into bravo units, which consist entirely of toughs who think they're the best warriors since Talpan Empirebane. These units are then put into the thick of the action as a wave of expendable but tough warriors (as opposed to conscript troops, who are equally expendable but unlikely to do the job): the first through a breach in the wall, the decoy units to spring a trap, the first across a ford to check for ambushes before the main body enters the river, and so on. If someone survives their wars in the point units they will eventually learn one thing: they're mugs. First through the breach is heroic, certainly; first into the city usually means the best of the looting, yes, but there do seem an awful lot of gaps in the ranks after each mission. A mercenary in this first year in the point units has a 20% chance of survival, 40% in his second year, 50%, 60% and 65% in the next three years. Beyond this, mercenaries have a 70% chance of living through a campaign as a member of a point unit, as opposed to the 90% chance of a six-year veteran in another unit. Overall, point units have 75% casualties, good units 27½% (a mercenary who takes his training seriously has half the chance of dying of an equivalent man in the point units). Conscripts, if used to support the better troops, also have 75% losses, or 100% if used as point units. Regular army troops' losses are 59%/75%.

(Applying these figures to the forces in the opening story, the usurper stands to win easily: he can eliminate the King's forces - if they stand and fight - and still have over 2000 mercenaries left!)

DOGS OF WAR

Cost?

Mercenaries are expensive. The longer the contract, the cheaper they come (due to their employment insecurity), but combat pay is still extortionate and they also have booty rights which can reduce the value of the property their employer can seize. Units can waive booty-rights in return for a guaranteed bonus, which would generally be offered to any group assaulting the palace or tax office of your target, but it can cost a considerable amount.

Mercenary Wages

Troop Type	*Garrison*	*Patrol*	*War*	*Combat*
Longbow Archers	55 gp	61 gp	110 gp	4 gp
Shortbow Archers	32	35	64	2
Artillerist	46	51	92	3
Crossbowman	32	35	64	2
Heavy Foot	46	51	92	3
Light Foot	26	29	52	1½
Heavy Hobilar*	63	70	126	4
Light Hobilar	43	47	86	3
Horse Archer	49	54	98	3
Heavy Cavalry	110	121	220	7
Light Cavalry	60	66	120	4
Medium Cavalry	87	96	174	6
Sapper†	46	51	92	3

* Mounted troops who fight on foot
† Military engineer

Most mercenaries sign up individually, and many of them need equipping. Elite mercenaries (the professional ones) will need about 10% of their equipment and 25% of their mounts replacing, lesser ones 50% of equipment and mounts (or 90% of equipment and all mounts for a Spring campaign). This equipment becomes their property unless they are thrown out of your forces. By tradition, a mercenary signing on receives a bonus of half the cash value of the equipment he brought with him, payable at the end of contract. For the employer, this means his units cost him less and there is an incentive to stay around till the end of the contract; for the mercenary it is a reason not to walk off with your last employer's equipment and sell it before getting a new contract. It is still more profitable to do so (hence the lack of equipment on bravoes), but issued equipment is rarely as good as an item you've been using for years - a favoured sword is a good example, as it's almost impossible to get one with the same weight, reach and balance... If a unit signs on together they will all be fully-equipped, but generally mercenary units have already weeded out the bravoes and thus cost more.

All wages are listed in AD&D gold pieces per month for one trooper, except 'Combat', which is the bonus payable for each day in which the troops see action. The figures have already been adjusted to allow for the higher pay of officers and sergeants being averaged out throughout the unit.

If hiring on as a unit, a platoon of 30 men cost 36 times the individual man's wages (as stated above), a company of 60 men cost 70 times the basic, a battalion of 240 men cost 300 men's wages, and a regiment of 720 men earn 900 times a single man's wages.

Mercenary Recruitment

Hiring mercenaries is easy as long as you have the money. Merely send couriers out to all the major cities to act as recruiting agents (they cost the same to hire as scribes but demand a bonus for each mercenary recruited), and sign up anyone who arrives. Mercenary officers will arrive and take over the training for you, and organise the troops in the mercenary way. Eighty per cent of the troops you hire like this in the Spring will be bravoes, twenty per cent elite. In this article, 'Elite' mercenaries are the professionals, as opposed to the bully-boys. Elite mercenaries with four or more years of service will be called ultra-elites. By the time of the Summer hiring the proportion of bravoes has dropped to 40% (one-third of the survivors of the point units having gone on to less savoury professions until next summer), and instructors are all ultra-elite. Any elite mercenary can advise you how many recruiting agents to send out, and where to send them, for the right number of mercenaries. As a guideline, in the Spring cities generally have one mercenary for hire per 200 inhabitants - don't bother recruiting in the rural areas.

In some cases the ratios will be different from those quoted above. An army with a reputation for lax discipline will attract more than its share of thugs (it seems the King's force at the beginning has that reputation), while the apparently inferior force tends to attract elites looking for reputation or siding with them because they're the 'good guys' - obviously the usurper is worthy, otherwise the famous Wolf Pack wouldn't join him.

Codes of Behaviour

In most cultures the mercenaries share a (usually unwritten) Mercenaries' Code which governs the way they are hired, employed, and disciplined. Each culture's Code is different, but they usually have the following in common:

Hiring: Any mercenary employed to recruit and command others has the ultimate command over their use and personnel: they may refuse missions or veto the addition of people to their unit. The first part of this clause is to protect good mercenaries from being used on suicide missions (although the commander will use his expendable mercenaries on high-risk missions, as noted above), the rest to protect the unit againts incompetents - the Duke's son may have commanded a regiment of the Regular Army in their barracks duties, but the Major commanding the Wolf Pack wouldn't let him take one of his elite platoons, partly because of his lack of real experience and partly because of the effect on that platoon of their regular Sergeant being replaced by a fop. Less esteemed commanders will, of course, usually give way to such demands from their employers.

Abuse of Contract: No unit can be used for anything outside the scope of their contract. A troop hired for border patrols cannot be brought into the cities to quell rioting, for example. The usual procedure in such cases is hurried renegotiation of the contract and addition of generous combat-duty bonus.

Discipline: Mercenaries are subject only to the discipline of the mercenary commander. This is to free mercenaries of such demand as regular prayer in the local Temple even if they are not of the appropriate faith, local curfews, not smiling at attractive ladies in the street, and so on. Mercenary commanders will make it clear to their employers what restrictions his men will agree to and make the men aware of what they have promised on their behalf, which become the rules for that unit. Mercenaries not on contract are subject to the local laws.

Generally, mercenary punishments will be lighter than those of civilians or regular armies. They have no use for prisoners at hard labour or mutilated men, so their punishments are extra duties, loss of priviliges, and transfer out of the elite units into the expendables (the latter is not officially a punishment, or even connected with

the offence, since the expendables are always glorified to stop people noticing how they're being used). Serious crimes - rape, theft, and so on - are punished by discharge from the mercenaries and handing over to the local authorities. If the unit is in the field there is usually only one penalty for any serious crime: death. It is a universal rule that anyone endangering his comrades also dies, and desertion is usually also fatal. In many cases, less reputable mercenaries ignore the custom of handing offenders over to local justice, which adds to their bad reputation (and their recruiting appeal among the bully-boys), but even they apply the death penalty for the heinous crimes of desertion or endangering.

Vengeance: If a mercenary or unit is wronged by anyone they, or their friends, will take revenge. Read 'Brothers' in '*The Spirit of Dorsai*' by Gordon R Dickson for the tale of the destruction of the entire city of Rochmont in reprisal for the murder of one mercenary.

If the wrong is non-payment of wages, watch out! The offended mercenaries will often respond by turning outlaw and taking plunder rights from the people they were hired to protect. Only the bravoes will do this, but the good mercenaries won't stop them while they're unpaid. And ex-mercenary bandits are a tougher proposition than normal ones...

Mercenary Statistics

AD&D

Troop Type:	*Level of Troopers*	*Level of Sergeants*	*Level of Lieutenants*
Regular Army	1	3	6
Bravo Mercenary	2	4	7
Elite Mercenary	2	5	8
Ultra-Elite	4*	7	9

* Very rare!

Warhammer Battle

Like Champions and Heroes, Mercenaries can be described by a series of modifiers to the basic creature profile. Creatures subject to *stupidity* will never be treated as mercenaries in the normal sense (as their nature makes mercenary work totally foreign to them).

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A
Bravo		+2					+2	
Elite		+3	+1				+4	
Ultra Elite		+5	+2	+1			+6	+1

	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	PV
Bravo	+1		12	+1	+1½
Elite	+1		+2	+1	+3¾
Ultra Elite	+2	+1	+3	+2	+11½

Percentile Systems

In systems like RuneQuest and Stormbringer the skills of mercenaries are as follows:

Bravo: Weapon 1 50%, Weapon 2 40%, Weapon 3 30%, Weapon 4 20%, Riding 20%, Survival 35%

Elite: Weapon 1 70%, Weapon 2 50%, Weapons 3 & 4 30%, Weapons 5 & 6 20%, Ride 65%, Survival 50%

Ultra Elite: Skills as Elite plus: Search 25%, Hide 40%, Listen 50%, Move Quietly 50%, Ambush 50%, Climb 35%, Conceal 35%.

Other Reading

The title of this article is, of course, stolen from Frederick Forsyth's book *The Dogs of War* (which he, in turn, stole from Shakespeare), which covers the organising of a (probably fictional, but some claim otherwise) '70s mercenary operation in detail. Mike Hoare's *Mercenary* likewise covers his real-life organising of the Congo mercenaries who are fictionalised in Wilbur Smith's *The Dark of the Sun*.

Any Dorsai story gives a good image of a future-tech mercenary, especially in relation to the Mercenaries' Code, which the Dorsai have formalised. Tim Powers' *'The Drawing of the Dark'* features a 16th-century mercenary although for much of the story he is not employed as such. Those parts where he is reflects the contempt of the professional warrior for the heroics of amateurs.

THE TROUBLE WITH TIME

Time Travel for the Judge Dredd RPG.

SECURITY RECORDS
COMPUTER ON LINE
ENTER YOUR NAME
:JUDGE TURLOW
VOICEPRINT ID CONFIRMED —
GOOD AFTERNOON, JUDGE
TURLOW YOU HAVE BEEN
CLEARED FOR ACCESS TO
SECURITY FILES AT PRIORITY
AA1. ANTI-SURVEILLANCE
SYSTEMS HAVE BEEN
ACTIVATED.
WHICH FILE DO YOU
REQUIRE?
:SPECIAL BRIEFING T1
ENTER AUTHORISATION CODE
:BV7-231; ON AUTHORITY OF
CHIEF JUDGE CONFIRM.
ACCESSING BRIEFING T1

Good afternoon, Judge Turlow. You have requested permission to use the Proteus Time Displacement Module in your current investigation. Accordingly, you must be briefed on some of the problems that are likely to arise in any use of this technology. Please note that all information related to Proteus is secret; citizens must *not* be informed of its existence and implications.

The Justice Department first learned that time travel was possible several years ago, when a criminal from the future murdered several Judges. Judge Dredd identified him as a perp who was, and is, frozen in The Vaults. Dredd arranged to have a bomb implanted in the criminal's abdomen. The murderer attacked Dredd, but Dredd detonated the bomb and executed the criminal. Unfortunately the time travel harness used in the attacks was destroyed by the explosion. This incident showed that time travel would be feasible in the near future, and also demonstrated a simple paradox: Dredd arranged to have the bomb implanted while the criminal was still frozen, before he had even begun to plan his crime.

In 2103 Judge Feyy's final prediction warned of a terrible disaster that would occur in 2120. This incident led to the Krysler case, which is best known as the Judge Child case. Please look at the chart of this case on your monitor screen.

The Krysler case is a frightening example of a time paradox. Feyy warned of disaster in 2120, and said that Owen Krysler would rule the city in its hour of need. Judge Dredd followed Krysler's trail across space to Xanadu, confronted him, and decided that he was innately evil, unworthy to serve as Chief Judge.

Without the prediction, what would have happened to Krysler? Dredd first encountered him in Memphis, Filmore Faro's stronghold. If Dredd had not intervened, Krysler would have been retained as Faro's slave and prophet, until Faro was eventually assassinated or died of old age. Judge Dredd wouldn't have killed Faro, so the series of events stemming from his death wouldn't have occurred as they did. Krysler would probably have never met the Angel Gang, reached Xanadu, or formed his hatred of Judge Dredd and Mega-City One. Every event between Feyy's death and Dredd's rejection of Krysler was shaped by precognition, first by Feyy's initial vision, later by Krysler's talents and the use of Oracle Spice.

Although Dredd rejected Krysler, the paradox continued. Krysler used his powers to attack Mega-City One, but was killed by Dredd. Grunwalder attempted to clone Krysler, but created a hideous mutant with unimaginably strong psychic powers. In 2120 this creature would have attacked Mega-City One and assumed absolute power, thus bringing about the disaster predicted in 2103.

By an apparent stroke of luck, the Justice Department perfected the Proteus time travel module in 2106, and Chief Judge McGruder sent Judge Dredd and Psi-Judge Anderson to investigate events in 2120. Through a computer record of the disaster, and a confrontation with The Mutant, Dredd learned enough to forestall Krysler's triumph; the Judges travelled back to 2106, then to Xanadu, and killed The Mutant a few moments after it was born. This death seems to have ended the threat of disaster in 2120.

At first sight it would appear that use of the Proteus module had saved Mega-City One; however, the case involved so many apparent coincidences that Tek-Div theoreticians became suspicious. Recent work has proved that the entire incident was a self-cancelling

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At first sight it would appear that use of the Proteus module had saved Mega-City One; however, the case involved so many apparent coincidences that Tek-Div theoreticians became suspicious. Recent work has proved that the entire incident was a self-cancelling time loop, affecting the years 2106 to 2120; the prediction was caused by the attack of The Mutant, which in turn was caused by the prediction. The Proteus module warped time sufficiently to allow such a complex paradox to form. When Dredd killed The Mutant in 2106 this section of looped time ceased to exist; in a sense Dredd destroyed the universe by his actions, substituting a new timeline.

This was not entirely unprecedented; there have been many incidents of precognition actually causing the incidents that were predicted. For example, citizens sometimes panic and commit crimes when Judges arrive to check out a precog vision. Fortunately most prediction takes place over a relatively short time period, and the paradoxes which occur are minor.

Department psychologists suspect that the information bought back by Dredd and Anderson has caused additional problems. For example, Anderson learned that she would apparently be head of Psi-Div by 2120. Soon afterwards she was partially responsible for the return of the Dark Judges; it seems likely that knowledge of her future may have been one cause of her carelessness. The reprimand she earned is likely to prevent her promotion. Similarly, Judge Dredd's report mentioned that McGruder was still Chief Judge when The Mutant appeared; it's possible that this influenced her judgement in the case that led to the death of Judge Omar and her resignation. Dredd learned that he would apparently be alive, and serving as a Judge, in 2120; as yet there has been no noticeable change in his behaviour, apart from a continued tendency to take suicidal risks.

The Proteus expedition may have created rifts in time. Soon afterwards Mega-City One was attacked by a squadron of World War Two German aircraft which mistook the city for Stalingrad. Fortunately few citizens were killed. More rifts may occur in the future.

At present attempts to use time travel to obtain knowledge of the future are banned, to prevent further paradoxes. Travel into the past is also forbidden, since there is too much risk of upsetting the balance of history. For example, one bullet could prevent the Apocalypse War, but the technology which created Proteus was in part derived from advances made as a result of the war.

Hopefully further research will suggest ways of preventing these paradoxes, and thus permit the personal time machines that are ultimately expected to appear.

For these reasons your request is refused. You may appeal, if you feel that the urgency of your investigation is sufficient to risk upsetting the space-time continuum.

GM's Notes

The Judge Dredd universe includes time travel and precognition. Both have been important plot elements in several adventures; the Krysler case is the most complex, but there have been other

ACKNOWLEDGED. SPECIAL BRIEFING T1 IS OVER. SECURE CONDITIONS WILL END IN FIVE SECONDS— FOUR— THREE— TWO— ONE— NOW.
DO YOU WISH TO LODGE AN APPEAL?
:NO.

examples. Fortunately these adventures have been remarkably consistent.

Precog visions are notoriously inaccurate; one possible rationale is the assumption that precogs select between a number of possible futures, and sometimes tune in to unrealised time lines. When a precog vision comes true it is often a self-fulfilling prophecy; for example, Judge Anderson's confused precog vision in the ABC murders case was in part responsible for the strain which led to Judge Monk's breakdown.

Precog visions which lead to Judges preventing a crime are inherently paradoxical. Fortunately accuracy seems to be limited over long time periods; for example, a precog might be able to send Judges to an approximate area ten minutes before a crime was committed, but would only be able to describe the criminal a few seconds before the crime. Owen Krysler once said "I can predict all futures but my own"; this seems to be true of all precogs, and is a useful limitation on their powers. Some interesting plot ideas could derive from this limitation; for example, all the precogs in a sector house might suddenly say that they can't see the future, because someone had planted a nerve gas cartridge in the sector house air conditioning system!

Although precog visions imply a degree of paradox, the problems they cause are relatively short-lived. Time travel is likely to lead to major paradoxes. The Krysler case is the definitive example, and seems to establish most of the rules;

1. The future isn't fixed. Time travel takes you into a potential future, a possible timeline which may or may not come to fruition.
2. Time travel into the past can alter the past and your own present. A new timeline forms at the moment you first arrive in the past. It may be superficially identical to the original timeline, but there will still be subtle changes. Information taken into the past can change the present.
3. There seems to be an 'observer' effect, possibly a manifestation of the uncertainty principle. Any knowledge bought back from the future is likely to change it.
4. Although there's no definite connection with the Proteus system, something does seem to have damaged the space-time continuum in the vicinity of Mega-City One. The idea that time travel is responsible seems reasonable.

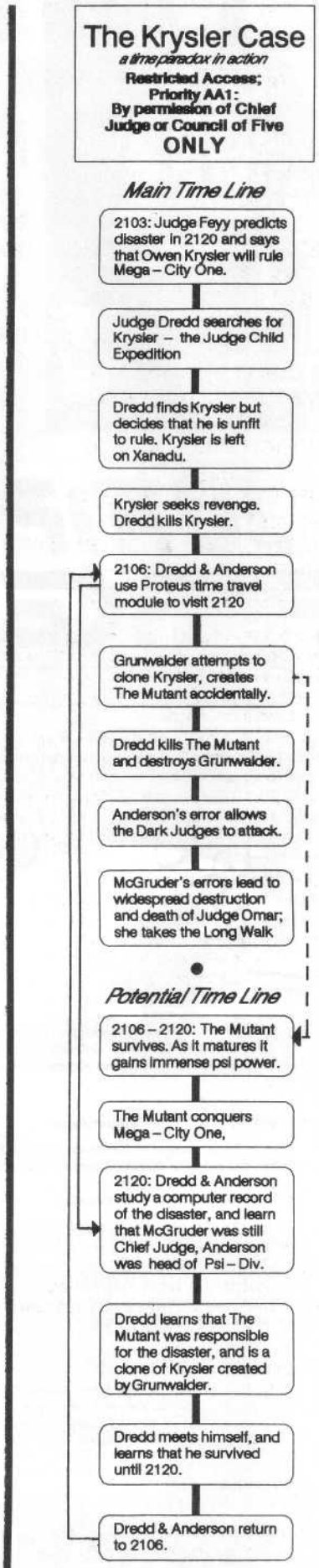
If these problems can be solved, it seems odd that more time travellers haven't arrived from the future. The most likely answer is that time travel is so inherently dangerous that it will never be de-restricted. The Judge murders described above remain a problem; the most plausible explanation is that the attacks, and subsequent events, changed the future so much that time technology will never be released to the public. An alternative but remarkably cold-blooded explanation is that Judges in the future might preserve the time line by allowing the killer to steal a time travel harness, possibly even brainwashing him to ensure that the murders will occur exactly as they were supposed to. Both explanations lead to many additional complications.

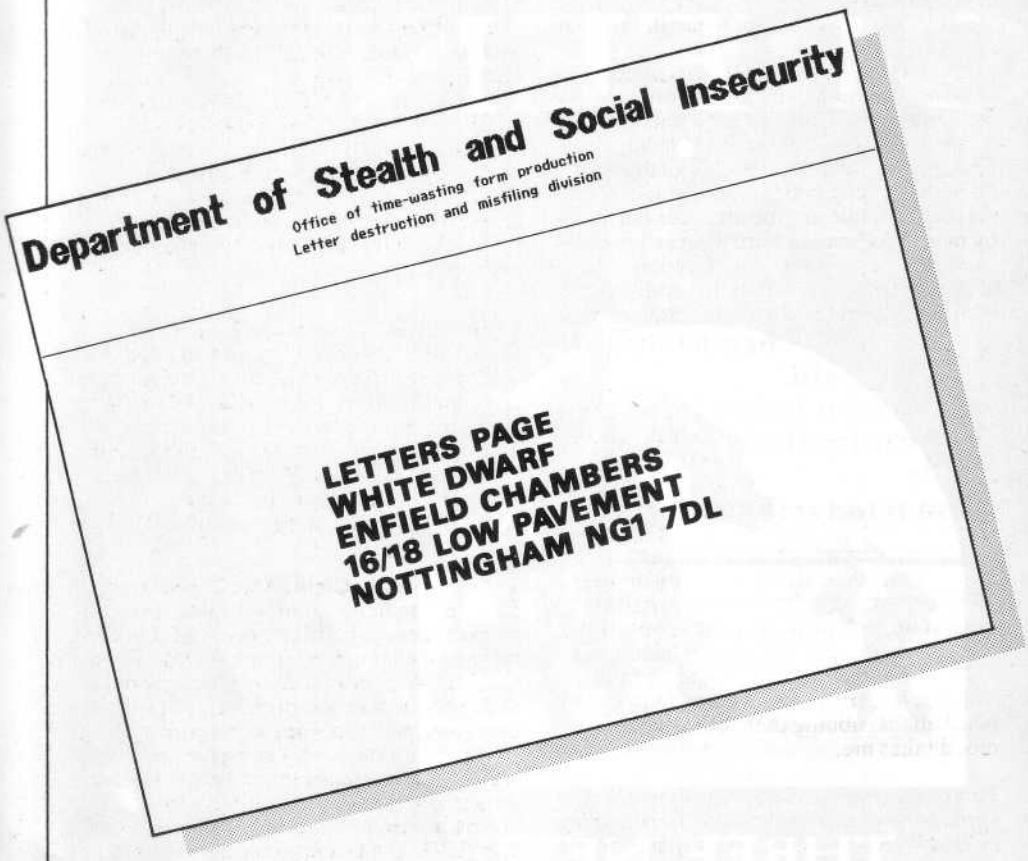
Nothing said so far prevents the use of time technology to observe the past. For example, there's nothing to stop the Justice Department using Proteus, or a more advanced machine, to send small spy robots back to observe crimes as they were committed. A spy in the sky camera is already small enough to pass unnoticed; with the miniaturisation techniques available by 2110 or 2120, equivalent machines could be as small as flies. Some would probably be used to study important historical figures (is it a coincidence that Fergee, the saviour of Mega-City One, was continually pestered by flies?), others would be used to track suspected criminals and their victims. What would happen if the Justice Department learned that apparently innocent citizens were under such surveillance?

Time travel offers so many easy solutions to problems that it's essential to keep it under firm control. Although players may have read about the Krysler case, there's no reason to assume that all the facts have ever been revealed, even within the Justice Department. Proteus could still be a closely-guarded secret, known only to a handful of senior Judges and Tek-Div personnel. Player characters wouldn't necessarily know anything about the machine; those who did would still have to make a very good case before they were allowed to use it, and risk memory erasure or exile to Titan if they discuss it publicly.

If you do feel obliged to run time travelling adventures, try to avoid really gross situations; it might be nice for the team to prevent the Apocalypse War, but doing so would certainly take your campaign away from the main-stream of adventures published for the game, and would leave the GM all the work of designing background events. It's more fun to embroil the team in an adventure in which they must try to maintain the status quo, even if it means allowing some form of disaster to occur.

Unless you are prepared to deal with all the paradoxes that can be caused by time travelling player characters, it's better to limit your campaign to the secondary aspects of this technology; cases in which there is evidence of tampering from the future, suppression of civilian time experiments, and the problems of precognition. Even these limitations can still lead to some interesting and peculiar adventures.





Thomas Brewer, Felixstowe: Did I miss some sort of competition, something along the lines of 'Become Guest Editor of Dwarf For a Month'? I think I must have done because there have been an awful lot of winners recently. If its not a competition then maybe there's a waiting list, if so could you put me down. It's getting so bad that its more of a talking point when the ediotr it the same as in the last issue when he's changed.

You guessed it, another Letters Page in the making. Sorry, I'm still here, and still receiving the fallout from other Letters Page editors...

Duncan Beanland, Leeds: Eoin (what sort of name is that?) Cannon holds no record for I have balanced 1 hobgoblin, 5 orcs, 3 wolves, 18 snotlings, 2 kobolds, and 19 goblins on Thrud. If anyone beats this I'll... I'll cry!

Somebody or Other, Milton Keynes: ...8 snotlings, 4 chaos warriors, 1 orc (the regular thing) and 4 mutant goblins (including my brother) on the magnificent Thrud the tap dancer and mass murderer.

Eddie England, Portadown: On my Thrud miniature I managed to balance: winged beast, bugbear, wolf, orc, goblin, lesser goblin, Judge Dredd, Lawmaster, Gandalf, Bill the Pony, dwarf, thief ogre, cleric, Shadowfax, ranger, Sauron, Saruman, hobgoblin, assassin, treasure chest, 3 members of the Ape Gang and an inconvenienced dwarf plus his toilet. This is a record. BEAT THAT!!!

Please... don't. And Marc Gascoigne should also have known better than to mention LRPGs in White Dwarf 84.

Andy Webster, Greasby, Wirral: I feel I must write to defend Marc Gascoigne, when said person expressed his views on Live Action RPGs he stated quite clearly that the views were his own. Mr Gascoigne is quite entitled to his views, which indeed served to give us something to argue about.

Furthermore, one just has to look at a live-action game: people dress up in silly costumes and hit each other with padded weapons. It is silly, however it is also fun. Before I started doing live action I professed much the same views as Marc, yet now I am a very keen LRPGer. I still describe it and look on it as a silly and inane pastime. I do it for the same reason I play RPGs, because I like it.

I find it strange that a hobby which gets generally looked down upon and maltreated, generally due to ignorance, can get so upset by one person's view of a subdivision of the hobby. I don't go up in arms every time someone refers to roleplaying as 'Advanced Let's Pretend' or 'Fairy Killing'. We ignore them and carry on because we enjoy it.

Whilst RPGs have been recently viewed in a better light, due to an acceptance that they require a modicum of intelligence, the same is not true of LRPGs. The enjoyment comes from the action. Most Live action adventures are nothing but a series of encounters with monsters, every now and then one may parley, but the fun stems from the action, not the satisfaction of successful mental activity.

Doogie Robertson, Glasgow: Who said LRPGs are all about rubber swords and silly costumes?

Have none of you donned your dark gloves, loaded your spud guns with raw carrot and set out to terminate other like-minded psychopaths?

Killer is alive and kicking, so chuck your rubber swords out, and get some spud guns!

Martin Wylde, Lincoln: Unless people have actually tried LRP they should not make uneducated comments. David Rawlins comments in WD83 were justified. I only wish the hobby was more widespread. At the moment I travel to the Labyrinth Club, over a hundred miles from my home every time I want some 'real' roleplaying. Meanwhile why don't you send a team down to Chislehurst caves and do a report on this hobby after actually participating. Maybe you would get a more realistic idea of what it is all about.

P A Jackson, Edgbaston, Birmingham: Why does being a live roleplayer immediately qualify a person for the complete and utter loony bracket? What makes roleplaying round a table any more sane than fleshing out the idea into a three-dimensional pastime? Much of the roleplaying I have witnessed, as a player and a referee, has outstripped the table version by several light years as the players have the extra medium of their bodies and a costume to complete the part.

Clogging orcs to death with a fake weapon is an integral part of the adventure, but most of the reminiscences which are bandied about in the pub later are of true roleplaying in terms of physical and verbal action. This requires intelligence and wit, an ingredient conveniently forgotten by the hobby's critics. I would dearly like to see some of these people show their roleplaying colours in a live environment before they dismiss it altogether and see if they can stand the pace.

Christopher Blunt, Brighton: All the Live roleplayers I've ever met have been (fairly) normal people who have found a great way of escape, or otherwise a way to just have fun in LRP. None of them have been loonies (although one or two were quite eccentric). Is it possible that Marc Gascoigne is a relative of Edwina Currie?

Marc Gascoigne is not now, nor has he ever been, a relative of Edwina Currie. How could you think such a thing? She/he (delete as applicable) is not that bad.

LRPGs have (had) a bad reputation because there was a certain 'cowboy' element involved which gave the whole business a very bad name. Added to this, there is a certain reluctance to admit that people do dress up when they play games, especially after years of explaining 'Of course not! Nobody dresses up to play D&D...'

LRPGs seem to have the same relationship to roleplaying as the Sealed Knot have to wargames. While some have an interest in both, the two hobbies should be seen as separate entities. Mind you, if we ever do feel like sending an ace investigative reporter off to do a feature on LRPGs, I think we've got just the man for the job.

On to something else. One article in WD85 provoked comment:

Will Fox, Swindon: ...four Paranoia robots, a young dragon, a Judge Dredd motorbike and the entire ratman flamethrower crew on top of a single snotling. I think I have broken his record.

Aaarghhh!

Nigel Cole, Perth: 'Half-elves destroy game balance.' What a load of absolute rubbish! Allan Miles evidently dislikes half-elves (I suspect he is a fanatical Tolkien fan), but in trying to find fault with them he misses the wood for the trees. Mr Miles, *all* races are superior to humans when it comes to thieving. They get more plusses than minuses to their thieving abilities, and they get infravision.

Whilst I agree that the level limits on half-elves are ridiculous, Mr Miles seems to have missed the obvious solution of replacing half-elf limits with the level limits of the elf parent.

'Why aren't there any quarter elves?' The answer is simple heredity. A half-elf would breed as follows:
Half-elf/half-elf: 25% chance of a human child, 50% half-elf, 25% elf.
Half-elf/human: 50% human, 50% half-elf.
Half-elf/elf: 50% chance half-elf, 50% elf.

(Taken from a book on breeding budgerigars!)

This situation can be needlessly complicated by allowing certain elf characteristics to breed independently.

The main reason gnomes were given illusionist abilities was to make them different from dwarves! If they are used, then scrap the illusionist option (as Allan Miles suggests) but give all gnomes a free reversed cantrip per level (which deals with their mischievous nature fairly neatly).

Mr Miles comments on half-orcs were stupid and unnecessary. Half-orcs make quite good thieves (especially with the revised level limits he suggests) and excellent fighter-thieves and assassins. There is certainly nothing 'stupid' about playing one. And as for 'perverse', whilst that can be applied to anything CE or NE, since when has a half-orc had to be of those alignments? In the campaign I'm in, we had a CG half-orc cleric-fighter that had frustrated paladin tendencies!

Chris Felton, Sheffield: Allan Miles' *More than Skin Deep* is the best article I've seen in the Dwarf in many moons, as it's the sort of article which encourages people to think about the logic behind the game and increases their understanding of the sort of society their character grew up in, which in turn leads to their thinking of character as members of a society rather than as experience point gathering machines.

I'd like to make a couple of suggestions on points arising from it. I agree that half-elves are unbalanced, and the only way that I have thought of limiting them is by social stigma. Because oif the differences between humans and elves (especially in lonegity) human/elf marriages are very rare. Therefore it is generally assumed that any half-elf is illegitimate, and has no status. This applies regardless of whethyer the PC is legitimate or not: people expect them to be illegitimate and therefore act as if they are. In the 'Let's bash somefing!' campaigns, of course, social stigmas won't have any effect, but very little will.

Half-orcs are officially allowed to be unlimited-level assassins and are restricted to 8th level as theives. Rather than just open up the thief class as Allan suggest, I think that the level limit should be transferred to assassins, partly because the thief class is unlimited to every other race, but mostly because intelligence is a requirement of the assassin, an half-orcs are the dimmest race in the game.

Shan Shawe, Braintree: After reading you article *More than Skin Deep* I think you absent-mindedly forgot to a very important racial group. I, of course, mean the female species.

As a species they can be extremely devious, stubborn, wily and charming whilst they quietly stick a knife between someone's (male, of course) shoulder blades - and they are only a few of their good points! The only main disadvantage in playing a female are the attitudes displayed by men. Women are portrayed as buxom barmaids, hags, women of ill-repute or creatures who wear practically nothing. Nowhere do you find the male equivalents, apart from the male counterpart of the hag. I have found to my dismay that players tend to 'forget' that there are female players and treat them as one of the boys - the one thing I know I am certainly not. Generally gemale characters aren't allowed to develop. Do GR players (male) know that females exist outside the world of inns and such places? Are they embarrassed by the fact that women players are no different (apart from the obvious) than male players and have the same needs as their male counterparts? I can put up with being treated as one of the boys (it can be extremely entertaining) as long as they remember that I am a fully clothed, buxom female who wouldn't think twice about rubbing them out when the mood takes me.

Part of the argument is surely about the application of game rules - and the reasoning behind them - to produce a roleplaying effect. As to the last letter, no comment. Instead:

Simon Richmond, Durham: ...the giant spider and balanced Kaleb Daark, his warhorse, 8 snotlings, a chaos harpy, a vampire, a werebear, a mummy, a wight, a giant beetle, a troll, 5 lesser goblins, Corbitt Shortstuff and an armoured duck on top of it.

No. No. Not that particular instead. Advertising in ***Dwarf*** *has always been a sore point with some readers, but...*

Jonathon Farmer, Darley Dale, Derbyshire: I really must complain about some of the drivel I've seen in the Christmas edition of you organ. To think that in the season of peace and goodwill you must resort to advertising *The Price of Freedom*, which is nothing more than neo-fascist anti-socialist paranoia... Better dead than red? Well, if America's the only alternative then I'd be more than willing to be overrun by the Soviet Union.

Please, an end to this gung-ho imperialism and a return to god old fantasy/sci-fi roleplaying or at least let's have another point of view... Gallant Spetznatz commandos defeating the merciless forces of the decadent West or those brave Sandinistas fighting off the wicked expansionist tyranny of the USA... Just a thought.

Ann Broomfield, London: What are you doing, distributing such jingoistic nonsense as *The Price of Freedom?* If the Americans want to play at commie-bashing then let them but I for one am sick of Reaganism. The world of 'goodies and baddies', and black and white morality should be confined to fantasy games where it belongs.

David White, Basingstoke: Being an ardent AD&Der I flicked to *More than Skin Deep* straight away and... shock, horror, gasp, Allan Miles totally tears apart the beloved half-elven thieves, claiming that they 'destroy game balance'.

If Mr Miles would care to glance at the PHB p28 he will notice that half-elves get 2 bonuses and no penalties, *but*, and this is the nub and gist of the whole brouhaha in a nutshell, all other races bar dwarves have at least 2 more bonuses than penalties.

So the whole edifice of his argument collapses.

Chris Knight, Torquay, Devon: How on earth can WD (and GW general) advertise, let alone distribute that latest piece of tripe from across the Atlantic - *The Price of Freedom?* I just hope that, in order to balance the game market, an RPG with the specific goals of killing Americans comes along. I wonder how our so-called American 'cousins' would like that!!?

Tom Buchanan, Gight, Aberdeenshire: Some of the newer games coming onto the market seem particularly distasteful in their subject matter - games such as *Delta Force* and *The Price of Freedom,* which promote xenophobia in an atmosphere where everyone seems to want world peace.

Most contemporary games are instantly recognisable as pure fantasy, but these more 'realistic' games give a warped and disturbing view of society. It has been said that RPGs can be educational - is this the kind of dangerous nonsense we want children to grow up with?

Perhaps the industry, both creative and retail branches, should exercise some degree of responsibility in what it produces. WD can help with this - it does not just reflect the state of the hobby, it can help to shape it. I'm not suggesting censorship, merely a little restraint.

Jonathon Turner, Randalstown, N Ireland: It pains me to have to write to you about that most scorned of RPGs, *Twilight 2000.* Why do you call it 'tacky' and then print an ad for some sort of 'Red Dawn II Strikes Back Part IV' kind of game?

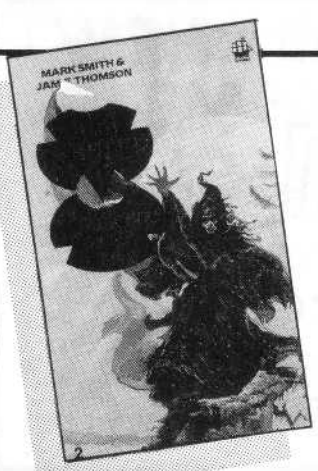
I suspect that the same people - and a few more besides - are going to be upset over the review of ***The Price of Freedom*** *in this issue. Having sat down and read the game before sending it out for review, I have to say that, personally, I find elements of* ***Price*** *offensive. It is also sheerest fantasy. I don't agree with some of the views in the letters above. After all, one man's 'warped and disturbing view' is another's vision of truth.*

So far ***Dwarf*** *has not carried support material for games such as* ***Delta Force, Price*** *and* ***Twilight 2000****. Should it?*

Jason Gammon, St Austell, Cornwall: In your list of credits I noticed that one *Bryan Ansell* had the job of being *BRYAN ANSELL*. Hmm. Well, it must be a very important occupation to get his name printed in red between the covers of White Dwarf. Can anyone be a *BRYAN ANSELL* or do you need to possess a certain name?

Having the name helps.

Letter-Opener: Mike Brunton



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